CURRENT ANECDOTES

AND METHODS OF CHURCH WORK.

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Vol. III, No. 7. CLEVELAND, APRIL, 1902. Cut Gems, Vol. VII, No. 7.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM LIFE.

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HE GOETH BEFORE YOU. (324)

Matt. 28: 10, 20; John 10: 4.

In Jerusalem, in 1868, a wise old monk told me a most interesting tradition. When it was rumored in Jerusalem that the Nazarene prophet had risen from the dead people everywhere feared to meet his ghost. They avoided lonely spots by day and fastened their doors at night for fear that they should see Jesus. Only those who had loved him in life wished to see him. After telling his disciples to meet him in Galilee he left behind him the scenes of his sacrifice. In the valley toward Emmaus he saw a field of grain, heavy-headed but not ripe.

"Ripen ye, corn blades. Be ripe and dry by sunset."

On a hillside he saw a merchant asleep by a fountain, with a bag of gold under his head. Jesus untied it and let it spill into the grass. Passing through a village he heard a workingman's prayer for work. He passed on and near Shechem heard a mother's prayer for her sick son, saying: "Send Jesus of Nazareth to me, as he came to my neighbor at Nain."

The mother did not see Jesus, but the boy asked for water and said: "I dreamed that God kissed me." He passed on and to a lost lamb imitated its mother's cry, and gently shaking an azalea tree, it sprang into bloom. Then he passed by the home where he had turned water to wine, and found them lacking food. As he turned away he thrust his staff through a vessel at the door.

Early the following morning the disciples were getting ready to leave Jerusalem and had gathered at the home of John, with their bundles and provisions. The owner of the field tried to hire them as they passed. Soon they came to the coin that the merchant did not take time to gather up, and the disciples rejoiced. A man was trying to bind an apricot tree and was complaining to the disciples that he had prayed for work and instead got misfortune. They told him of the ripened grain below.

The woman whose child had been healed invited them to her home for refreshment. Nathaniel was attracted by the blooming azalea, and as he climbed to get the flowers he heard the lamb and rescued it. As they came to Cana they heard cries of distress and found that the couple had tried to get the mutton from the lamb and had used the broken vessel without noticing. Then the disciples remembered them and Peter employed the young man in his fishing business at Capernaum; and with other experiences they came to the sea and found a boat Jesus had pulled up on the sand, and they toiled all night, and in the morning he called them to breakfast.

What a satisfaction it is to know that Jesus prepares our path, and always goes before us, and that on the shore of the crystal sea he shall call us to sup with him and see him as he is.

A DOOR IN HEAVEN. (325)

Luke 3: 21; John 1: 51 and 14: 3; Heb. 12: 22; Rev. 4: 1 and 21: 25.

In my childhood I once stood in the yard of a country farmhouse in the evening, caring for my father's horses while he transacted some business matters in the dwelling. The night was chilly and dark, and threatening clouds hid every star. Some evening gathering of unusual importance made that old homestead strangely full of animation. The curtains of the windows were closely drawn, but shadows of flying forms and happy faces flickered on the shades, while occasionally

shouts of laughter and strains of old songs could be heard.

At last my childish fears and the bleak wind overcame me, and I cried aloud, and called, "Father! father! come, come; I am cold; I am afraid out here!"

Instantly the door opened. A glow of warm light illuminated the whole yard, and my father stood in the door smiling at my timidity. Beyond him I could see the great fireplace piled high with blazing logs. When my father quieted my fears, he returned to the house to finish his business. While I waited I saw the door open frequently to let in other guests. At last, on the suggestion of one of my schoolmates, who lived in the house, my father came and called me in. Oh, that open door! that welcome! that fire! the feast of good things! the games! the fun!

The other morning when I was questioning the Word of God for a message to bring to you, my eyes fell on these words: "A door was opened in heaven." How vividly it brought back that night and its open door!

"FATHER." (326)

Is. 63: 16; Jer. 3: 19 and 31: 9; Ps. 103: 13; John 20: 17; Rom. 1: 7.

Once I saw a soldier stricken down in the battle of Atlanta. Several bullets had pierced his body, and the surgeon said, as he turned the warrior's face to the sky: "No use, my lad! no use! I'm sorry, but I can't do more for you." I saw the quivering lip and the startled eye, and trembled as I thought of his soul. His eyelids drooped, his mouth moved in whispers, then the deathly pallor, which follows the breaking of an artery, began to overspread his face. Then he whispered another prayer. He asked for water; but while I put the canteen to his lips he refused it, and opening wide his deathly eyes he partly raised himself and died as he sharply called "Father!" The far-away look remained fixed in his eyes when his face was cold. His praying father died the year before. And oh! I am sure that when that soldier looked away in prayer, the door of heaven opened, and he saw his father waiting in the light. It startled me in my godless life.

HOLY DAY. (327)

Exod. 20: 8; Neh. 8: 9; Is. 58: 13.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

When Bayard Taylor, the traveler and poet, died, great sorrow was felt and exhibited by the people of this nation. The spontaneous desire to give some expression to the respect in which Mr. Taylor's name was held, pressed the literary people of Boston, both writers and readers, forward to a public memorial in the great hall of Tremont Temple. As a friend of Mr. Taylor, I was called upon to preside at that memorial gathering.

When the evening came, Professor Longfellow was too ill to be present, but he sent the poem, which he had written at my request. The great hall was crowded with the most cultivated people of Boston. On the platform sat many of the poets, orators and philosophers, who have since passed into the Beyond. When, after several speeches had been made, I arose to introduce Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, the pressure of the crowd was too great for me to reach my chair again, and I took for the time the seat which Dr. Holmes had just left, and next to Ralph Waldo Emerson. Never were words of poet listened to with a silence so respectfully profound as were the words of Professor Longfellow's poem as they were so touchingly and beautifully read by Dr. Holmes:

"Dead he lay among his books!
The peace of God was in his looks,
Let the lifeless body rest!
He is gone who was its guest;
Gone as travelers haste to leave
An inn, nor tarry until eve.
Traveler, in what realms afar,
In what planet, in what star,
In what vast aerial space,
Shines the light upon thy face?
In what gardens of delight
Rest thy weary feet tonight?"

Before Dr. Holmes resumed his seat, Mr. Emerson whispered in my ear, in his epigramatic style, "This is holy Sabbath time."

WON BY A LAYMAN. (328)

Matt. 12: 12; Luke 15: 27, 32; John 5: 17; James 5: 19; 1 John 4: 19 (R. V.).

Down in Richmond Village a poor man lay dying, five weeks ago today. I had often visited him in his poverty. But he felt, as I could plainly see, that my visits were official, and my gifts were probably those of some public charity. Oh, how much loftier and holier is the word "friend" than the word "reverend!" So I left him as unrepentant as I found him, and as ungrateful for the food and medicine as are the habitual recipients of public bounty. But four weeks ago today I met a Christian of this congregation, and asked him to go down and visit the old man and take him a basket of food and medicine. My Christian friend looked amazed at my request, and asked me how he would look with a market basket going through all those streets on Sunday. But he went with no professional title. There was no "Rev." before his name, and no "D. D." after it. The dying man's heart opened in the presence of a plain-spoken man, and he honestly inquired if it was actually a fact that there was another life after this. They talked together as friend with friend; and Jesus drew near as they talked, and their hearts burned within them. The sick man believed, and prayed for forgiveness, and died five days after, saying to his nephew: "Don't put off giving your heart to God." Last Sunday my friend asked me for more such work, saying it was a new experience to him. "As God liveth," said he, "I shall not forget that Sabbath."

LIKE A MOTHER. (329)

Is. 55: 13 and 61: 3 and 66: 13; John 14: 18; 2 Cor. 1: 3.

I saw a sweet little incident in a train coming from Pittsburg recently. A mother with

a little child in her arms had given the child something to drink in a glass, and the child held on to the glass, and the mother tried to get the glass away, but the child screamed and made such a riot as to disturb the passengers, so that she let it retain the glass, although she very carefully held on to the glass and did not wrench it from the child as some mothers would have done. Soon it went sweetly to sleep and she picked it up tenderly and placing it on the opposite seat, covered it up and then stooped down and kissed it, not knowing anyone was watching her. She then reached down and slowly unfolded one finger at a time of the tiny little hands, and then took out the glass, and laid it aside, holding on to the fingers all the time. She then put back the handle of her fan, and closed the fingers, one by one of the sleeping child, over the little fan, and the child never woke but went on with sweet dreams, with something safe in its hands, in place of something which was dangerous. As the mother loves her child, so God loves his children, and we who would imitate his great example should slowly unfold the fingers of those we love if they hold in their soul in their character something that is evil or something that is not the best, and lovingly put in its place that which is good.

VOICE OF PROVIDENCE. (330)

Gen. 3:8; I Kings 19:12, 13; John 12:28, 29; Acts 14:17; Rev. 3:20.

You remember how the Prince of Mysore, India, a few years ago had a telephone run from Delhi into his district. He had seldom been out of his district, was a local king under tribute, of course, to England. Over the telephone there came a message from Delhi with reference to a great railroad enterprise in northern India, in which he wished to invest a great deal of money. But he would not believe his friend in Delhi was speaking to him. It sounded like a friend's voice, but he thought that some one was deceiving him. He insisted on going outside and looking to see if the man was speaking through the side of the building. As he listened to the receiver he could hear the voice of his friend distinctly, trying to explain to him about this railroad enterprise for the benefit of his kingdom. But he would not believe that it was his friend who was speaking and refused to pay any further heed to the message than to wait for a messenger to come with a letter. But by the time the messenger had traveled all those hundreds of miles the great railroad meeting had taken place, its officers were elected and his principality was left out of consideration. You will recognize my illustration when I say that there are a great many things which come to you and you say that it is good fortune. You recognize the good fortune, but you cannot believe it was the gift of an intelligent personality, of a father that loves you.

WITHOUT HIS WEDDING GARMENT. (331)

I remember being in the borders of Persia years ago as a traveling correspondent. An Englishman of our party who started from Egypt with us left his passport somewhere. But he said: "Never mind, never mind. We never use it; I do not want a passport; I am going to be independent. I can travel anywhere. No one ever asked me for my passport; and I will not take the trouble to send back to Cairo for that."

He was the only man in the party who did not have a passport. When we reached the Euphrates river and crossed the border into Persia, the very first thing the officer asked for was our passports. We all produced our passports but this man. He had none to show and they immediately ordered him back. As he refused to go back, in his English independence, saying he was "an Englishman," they thrust him into prison, and we had to correspond with the English Consul at Aden, who simply sent word back that if the man had received a passport he ought to have it with him, and if he did not have one with him they could do what they chose with him.

We left him there and we do not know what became of him, although I have no question that somehow he was released. But he was too independent to be free. The rest of us were as "free as the mountain air and independent as the soaring eagle." We had passports, and we were dependent upon our nation, and consequently, we were free.

UNION WITH CHURCH. (332)

1 Kings 18:21 (R. V.); John 10:1, 16; Acts 4:23.

If a man is going to fight in the army for his nation, the best thing for him to do is to enlist in the army and thus be regularly mustered into service. He cannot fight on his own hook to any great advantage; but if he joins with all the other soldiers of his army he will be investing himself to the best possible good for the nation. If a man would join a society, be it the Masons or the Odd Fellows or any other secret organization, the best thing to do is not to try and crawl in the back window; but to go through the formal initiation and enter in the regular way. If a man wishes to enter the Church of God the best thing for him to do is to come in the regular way.

"LISTEN!" (333)

1 Kings 19:12; Ps. 19:1-4 (R. V.); Acts 14:17; Heb. 11:6; Rev. 3:20.

The great procession of the Almighty God with all its glories passes by with all its exhibition of power and love, and God reaches out to this young man and says to him, "I want to speak to you, listen, listen!" But the procession has gone by. It is too late, because the young man does not believe that God would stop to speak to him. It is the very first necessity that we should "believe that God is and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

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SHINING AND DARKENED FACES.

Gen. 4: 6; Ex. 34: 29; Matt. 25: 37; Rom. 14: 12; Phil. 2: 15.

My text has said that every man shall give an account of himself unto God, and we gather from the various forms in which it is expressed in the Scriptures that that account is to be given by himself, not in words, but in character. Now if when we make this wonderful change, when this dead body becomes a chrysalis, out of which comes forth a new being to fly to the heavenly gates, we ask how we shall give our account to God, it is answered by looking back at the face of Moses. When he came down from consultation with God he had a face that was shining so that all recognized it. But he was unconscious that his face was shining. But he had been with God and it did shine and all the others recognized it. When a person gets to heaven his account is all told by his character, by his disposition. Not that he must go through a full account and read all the items of his actions, and say "this I did" and "this I did" and "the other I did." But the moment the countenance of the Almighty God rests upon the departing spirit from this world, the entire account is given in, and given in by the character of the spirit that has lived in the body.

GIVING THANKS. (335)

Luke 22: 19, 20; Rom. 1: 21; Phil. 4: 4, 6; Heb. 12: 2.

To be thankful is to be especially Christ-like. One of the most touching exhibitions of the sublime character of the Son of God was shown at that last supper, when so near him was Gethsemane's sorrow, even unto the sweat of blood; when just before him was the scourge, the crown of thorns, the insults, the heavy crushing cross, the pain of being nailed to the tree and lifted in disgrace in sight of all the people, to suffer and die through the heat of a Palestine day. Even then to be thankful! Why, brethren, we have met with sorrows, we have stood and looked into the grave, we have been disappointed, but how far we have been from Christ, who with all these horrors perfectly clear before him could take that cup and give thanks for all that cup meant! That cup in his hands then meant an expression of love for his disciples everywhere, for the world in its entirety, and that love for his fellowmen required that he should go through all the suffering of that torturing death. He was thankful that he was called upon to suffer; he was thankful that he was put under the shadow; thankful that he was to be crushed under the cross; thankful that he was able to die for us. Oh, the wonderful spirit of Christ, the unselfish love of the Son of God. We are such sinners inasmuch as we are not willing to take that cup and think that our sorrow will in some way bless the world, in some way God is working out his good and our prosperity by our sorrows and losses. Let us be thankful that we are put on the outposts, that God honors us with the opportunity to suffer for him.

FAITHFUL IN A CORNER. (336)

1 Sam. 17: 34, 35; Dan. 1: 8; Luke 2: 52 and 16: 10; 2 Tim. 2: 4.

Mr. Spurgeon was a boy of sixteen years of age when he began to preach in a little country church. Down the years before him was the great Metropolitan Tabernacle at London, where were to be assembled 4,000 in his regular congregation. His name was to be known wherever the English language was spoken, and to be honored through the centuries after he should go hence. But there he was a boy of sixteen, preaching in a little country church in a country parish. His whole duty then was there. He was not to think about the Metropolitan Tabernacle and carry his mind from the work in hand off to what he was going to do in London, even if he should have possibly imagined the extent of his after work. It was his duty to his God to give his full and complete attention to the work before him, and if he had not done that with his whole soul he would never have preached in the Tabernacle in London. If he had not been so devoted and steady, so earnest and consecrated in his little country parish, he would never have stood before the admiring thousands, and never been able to draw the souls of so many into the kingdom of Christ.

SENSE OF NEED. (337)

Matt. 5: 6; Mark 10: 51; John 7: 37; Rev. 3: 17.

If a young man can get a full sense of his need of an education, even if he cannot go to a college, he has gained more than the four years' instructions can possibly give him without it; for in some way he will secure it. This is the chief thing to arouse in the young people—a sense of need. Jesus hath said in this inspired writing that the great sin of the Laodiceans was that they had no sense of need. That is the greatest sin of the world. If you can get your child to appreciate the fact that what you advise him is something he will need by and by; if you could only persuade him to appreciate the fact that a good name, that education, that character, that habits are all connected with the needs of the future, he will become the good man you wish him to be. But if you send your child out in the world with no sense of future need, need of the present help, or of discipline, or of instruction, he must go into the world very weak and untrained for the battle of life.

CONSECRATED LIFE. (338)

Neh. 6: 3; Matt 11: 12; Luke 14: 27-30; John 21: 15; Acts 20: 24.

It was Samuel Cunard, of Glasgow, who was determined to build ships. He had nothing but a penknife, and he whittled out little boats. He was a poor boy, but he was ever examining ships. He loved ships, and when he loved them enough his future was all settled. Sam Cunard was a poor young man, when they asked him for the design for the first Cunard steamship. Then he was employed in

the company, and then he really became the company, and for forty-five years his steamships went all over the seas of the world, and never lost a passenger, having in all 107 steamers on the seas of the world. He loved shipbuilding so much that nothing else would answer for him. Others have loved shipbuilding. But they did not love it enough. "Peter, lovest thou me enough to accomplish this ambition?" "Cunard, lovest thou shipbuilding enough to give all for it?"

SHUTTING THE DOOR ON JOY. (339)

Prov. 19:17; Matt. 19:22 and 25:40; Acts 13:46.

A poor child applied at a rich home on Sixteenth street some eight years ago and cried for something to eat. She was nearly bare. The rich people came to the door and the poor child asked for something to eat. They hesitated for a moment at such a pitiable sight, but shut the door, saying that there were so many beggars they could not do anything for this child. The little child turned aside and applied four doors above at a very small house. The dear good woman took the little child in and fed her and clothed her, and sent her to school. She has been four years in the Temple College, and is one of the brightest students we have. She will pardon my reference to it, if she hears me, because her secret remains with me. In that little home, comparatively poor, they received the little child, and afterwards adopted her with her mother's consent. She is as the bright sunshine of that house. But the rich man who had the first chance and who had the money to care for that little child, refused to do his duty. But he shut himself out of one of the richest blessings God ever sent to his door. When poor Ruth came in her poverty and rags, a foreigner, and lay down at the feet of Boaz and appealed to him, it was his right and his duty to care for her. He recognized his duty, followed the right, and spread his mantle over the stranger.

A CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM. (340)

2 Kings 5:2, 3; Is. 11:6; Mal. 4:6; Matt. 18:5.

The Infant Department is a great missionary force in the church because a child can speak what a grown up person cannot speak regarding Christianity. There came into our Sunday school, at Mervine and Berks streets, a little boy, and none of his family went to church. His teacher, Mrs. Sheaf, insisted that every one of her scholars should ask their parents whether or not they were Christians. A little boy went home and when his mother went down to the cellar for a hod of coal, he pulled her down and whispered in her ear: "Mamma, are you a Christian?" There is not in books, there is not in poetry, there is not in song, there is not in eloquence any power like that when a little child five years old says to his mother, "Mamma, are you a Christian?" Because it brings the gospel right into the Holy of Holies of her heart. Since then that family has been very helpful in our church-life. That mother, a devoted, saintly Christian, always in her place in church in the subsequent years, has been loved as few have been loved.

RESPONSIBILITY.

Prov. 14:12; Acts 17:30 (R. V.) and 26:9.

The tiger that comes in from his jungle and creeps up to the back yard of the humble Indian cottage, sneaks in suddenly and leaps upon the innocent children at play with their marbles in the yard and crushes them, strews their blood over the flowers of the front garden while the mother in horror looks on at the carnage—he believes he is right, and he believes that it is his duty to take those children, and it is in accord with his nature so to do. But let the poor animal go, let him go and tear other children; let him go in peace and live on your friends and let him strew the earth with the bones of your loved ones. The tiger believes he is right.

We have carried this country altogether too far into the idea that a man is not responsible for what he believes. That if a criminal believes he is right it is all-sufficient and that he will be excused by the Lord and ought to be excused by man. Can you teach such a doctrine any longer?

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES. (342)

Matt. 5:29; Luke 14:27, 33; 1 Cor. 9:24-26; Rev. 4:21.

I am reminded of Napoleon when he came to that stream at the foot of the Alps. He was told that they could not get the artillery across that deep stream that was running so swiftly. But Napoleon said we must cross "this stream here or we cannot see Italy." This stream is the first thing to attend to. Devote your attention to this first and then we will enter Italy. It was Bismarck who said almost the same thing with reference to a marsh they had to cross. "Men, we must cross this marsh or we cannot see Paris." They devoted their attention to the crossing of the marsh, and they were afterwards able to see and capture Paris. They who would carry out Christianity to perfection and live it to the highest degree of perfection, must be always doing those things which are to be done and in the way which prepares them for the kingdom of Heaven.

OUR OWN ARCHITECTS. (343)

Gen. 29:20; 1 Kings 7:13, 14; Matt. 7:24-27; 1 Cor. 3:10-13.

I was shown a great house out in Iowa, which was built on the frontier out of the logs of the forest, when the country was filled with Indians. It still retains its architectural contour, and it was pointed out to me as one of the best residences in that part of Iowa. The man who built it went out there, a young married man, leaving behind him his wife and a little baby. He went out there and built for love; for his little wife and his little child. Into every log and chip there went a part of that

love. He is a rich man now and a family is gathered around his knees. He who builds for his God because he loves him, builds beautifully. Hiram of Tyre, the humble carver, may not have seen Jerusalem until he had constructed a spiritual temple there. Did it ever occur to you that the great man saw every pillar, casting and arch of that great temple before one stroke had been made in the quarries underneath, before any of the gold had been brought from Ophir, or a tree leveled on Mount Moriah. He saw all the platform constructed 200 feet above the valley; he saw its pavement of marble covered with gold and glass; he saw its wonderful arches; he saw its Holy of Holies; he saw the georgeous ceilings covered with gold; he saw all the intricate carvings inside and out which were to be overlaid with gold. He saw it all. But it was a spiritual temple. For before there was a stone carved or a cedar taken down from the snow-topped mountains of Lebanon, he saw in prophetic vision the whole Temple.

Oh, to be such an architect. To lay out in advance one's life, to see in advance one's business, and have it all before him in ideal, and then to build to that plan day by day.

BUILDING FOR GOD. (344)

1 Kings 7: 13, 14; 1 Cor. 3: 9-13; 1 Pet. 2: 4, 5.

Go ask any Free Mason who loves his work and believes in the principles of his lodge what he thinks of Hiram and he will tell you that Hiram Abi has passed a resurrection and can never die; that on earth so long as the world shall roll Hiram, the workman, will be remembered. Though the magnificent Temple may crumble through the ages into dust, his monument is in the hearts of men, his monument is in the respect of mankind, his monument is in the honor of God to his memory, which is more than earth can give. I think that when we ascend to that glorious temple in that land of morning, we may ask for Hiram, King of Tyre, or for Solomon, and may not find them. But when we look for the workman, true to his work however humble it was, and who was the best of his line, and who built for love, he will be pointed out for you at once. How such an architect must enjoy the temples of Heaven, he that knew so much about their glory here and made it the chief object of his life to worship God in their construction. I do not need to point the lesson. I would ask myself what I can best say to young men. And I point back to Hiram of Tyre as being a most excellent example for a young man to follow. Work not for mere dollars and cents, not simply for board and clothes, but do your work as a means of worshipping God.

WHERE THE HEART IS. (345)

Matt. 6: 21; John 14: 2 and 16: 5; Phil. 3: 20; 1 Thess. 2: 19.

When we were in Cuba a young woman over at Marianao told us she walked over to Moro Castle every morning. It was a long walk, and she said she did it because her brother was a prisoner there. She had never been inside that castle and had no interest in it until her brother had been incarcerated there, and then every morning that sister walked all the way from Marianao to the great castle and looked at it until she could count every stone and knew every tower and knew the color of every archway and recognized the position of every sentry. She was interested in the castle because she had a brother there. We would be interested in heaven's towers and would count its embattlements and would love to read and study of it, if we appreciated the love of our Christ who is there.

A CHRISTLESS WORLD. (346)

1 Cor. 1: 21; Eph. 2.

I remember sitting in the church in Bethlehem alone and wondering what the world would have been if Christ had not been born. What would this world be? How would our civilization stand? What would be our home life? What would have been our improvement? What our moral character? What our love for each other? What would be the communication between nation and nation; what would be the condition of this world if Christ had never come? And that thought swept upon me until I leaped into the other thought, that the day shall come when there will be room for Christ in the earth; but there seems to be little room for him now.

CAUSE OF DOUBT. (347)

Matt. 14: 31; 2 Cor. 4: 3, 4.

All of us pass these dangerous seasons when we see the wind between us and God, between us and duty, between us and an important deed. There is an imaginary breeze or an imaginary cyclone; we stop and begin to sink, and we will sink altogether unless we gather up our common sense and say, "There is no wind between me and the object of my desire; there is nothing between me and God that can hinder me." Call out, "Lord, save me, for I perish," and as sure as the appeal goes up, as sure as experience repeats itself among mankind, just so sure Christ will reach out and take you by the hand, and, smiling, will say, "Wherefore dost thou doubt?" And as you try to answer his question, you will say, "Lord, I know not why I fell as I did, except it be for my past sinning. Strengthen me, Lord, against such weakness in the future."

STARLIGHT FAITH. (348)

Is. 50: 10; James 1: 10.

Sometimes we waken in the night and only get a glimmer of distant stars. All the light we have is from some distant planet. I am speaking now to some people whose faith is so small they are wondering whether they are saved or not. They are in the shadow of their religious life, and they can only see the distant stars. No sun for them. No moon for them, with its benevolent light. But a twinkling of some distant, uncertain, unknown

worlds is all the faith they have. But the twinkling of that reflected star is proof that there is a sun somewhere, and proof that the night shall go, and the morning they already see shall dawn for you. It may be that you are in the night of poverty, and have no occupation, no business, no employment. People do not work in the night. Christ himself uttered the thought. Hence, as you have no work, no labor, no profitable business, you are in the night. Your business is declining, people do not come, you are losing your patronage, your customers, your employment. But that shadow, my brother, shall pass. The most uncertain things in the world are shadows of that character.

CALL THE PHYSICIAN. (349)

John 5: 40; Rom. 10: 13; Rev. 3: 20.

A doctor, knowing that a patient who lived near him could be cured, and desiring very much to see the patient relieved, was held back by the customs of society or professional courtesy. He longed for the opportunity to do the thing that would save that life, and yet he waited for the invitation. When the invitation did come, how quickly, how easily, and with what joy he obeyed the summons, and came in. Christ stands at every door of every home, and He longs to go in, but he waits nevertheless for an introduction. He has limited Himself because of divine modesty, so that He will not even encroach on a sinful family. He won't stop long at that door spiritually unless He is invited. But, as the Bible represents it, He stands at the door, and He raps to let us know that He is there, and waits nevertheless for an invitation. He does not break down the door; He does not force it open Himself; He does not lift the latch; He simply announces that He is there, and there He stands and waits.

CASTING OUT SIN. (350)

1 Thess. 5: 23, 24; 1 John 3: 8.

In the hospital the other day they had a case of poisoning, and they gave an antidote for the poison. But the friends were very anxious because the doctor did not seem to take more interest in the case. They began to complain about it. The doctors said, "That antidote is sure. It works slowly but surely. Just be patient. The antidote will work. It will accomplish its purpose. The poison shall be driven from the system." They waited and waited, and the hours passed, and slowly the antidote worked into the system, until it began to give battle to that poison; and at last it expelled it in triumph from the body through every pore. When a man fully realizes that sin is a poison, a deadly poison, and asks, aye more, cries out to be saved from it, and says I believe Jesus Christ can and will and does save me; and he is baptized and connects himself with the church, he has taken the antidote. It may require time to change his system, but the change will come.

REMEMBER THY CREATOR. (351)

Eccl. 12: 1; Matt. 13: 19; 1 Cor. 11: 25; Heb. 2: 1; 2 Pet. 1: 12, 13; Rev. 3: 3.

Many of us live in the presence of good books which are covered with dust. We need to be mindful and appropriate the thoughts and impulses of those books by taking those books and reading them. We need to re-read many of the books we have read. In our houses are many, many excellent things which we need to re-appreciate, and that thought introduces us to an idea of the need of humanity to be continually reminded. We have thoughts enough in our brains for our ordinary purposes, and probably for our extraordinary purposes, but we need to be put in mind to call for them. We have experience enough to do better than we now are doing. It is a disgrace to us, at our years, that we are not living a more perfect life than we are; and the chief reason why we fail is because we are not reminded. We do not take out from our memories the book that will help us or the thought that should inspire us. The direful human need of being reminded seems to have been present in the mind of Jesus, when he instituted the Lord's Supper.

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BEST THOUGHTS ON MISSIONS,

From the Student Volunteer Convention at Toronto.

BY M. MATTESON WILBUR.

IDEAL MADE REAL. (352)

1 Kings 18: 21; Ezek. 33: 32.

Twenty years ago a young artist was painting a picture which he hoped would bring him fame. The subject was a woman, cold, pinched and hungry, shivering in the bitter wintry streets, where on either side the doors were closed against her. In her arms was a pitiful babe. The name of the picture was "Homeless."

As he worked the spirit of the picture grew more and more upon him, until, laying down his brush, he said: "This is real! Why do I not do something for these wanderers?" He gazed at his picture long and earnestly; then, with determination, he said, "I will give my life to seek them!"

He went with his message to the outcasts. Later he prepared for the ministry. When the opportunity came, after many prayers, he went as a missionary to Africa. This was he who was afterward known for his statesmanship and his power to lift men to spiritual things, the good Bishop Tucker of Uganda.

CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS. (353)

Matt. 28: 19.

A young minister said to the Duke of Wellington that he had observed and studied over the matter for a number of years and had come to the conclusion that the conversion of the world was an impossibility. The Iron Duke fixed the youthful divine with his penetrating glance. "Young man," he said, "it is evident that you have not yet received your marching orders."

FEET WASHING. (354)

Luke 22: 27; John 13: 14; 1 Pet. 5: 5.

In speaking of the simplicity and humility of Christian character, Bishop Thoburn relates the following:

"At a time when I was young I was suffering from lameness. I roomed one night with an eminent man. In the morning, awakened by some slight sound, I lifted myself upon my elbow to see what it was. To my consternation I saw the Bishop blacking my boots. I implored and insisted that he stop, but he calmly persisted until the task was finished.

"Many people have asked me what was meant by Christ's command 'Wash ye one another's feet.' It is quite possible that at this day it may mean 'Black ye one another's boots.'"

ENDUED WITH POWER. (355)

John 14: 12; Acts 1: 8.

I stood by a train of fifty cars, loaded with iron and coal, each one larger than the engine. In the cab, with his hand on the lever, sat the engineer. Suppose he had left the engine and gone to the rear of the train and put his shoulder against the caboose in a vain endeavor to push it up the grade. Instead of that he pulled the lever, the steam escaped; slowly at first, and then with a mighty rush, the train went forward.

As impossible it is for human energy to transform a heathen world as for the engineer to push the train. But the Holy Spirit, energizing the heart of the Christian, carries the gospel forward with ever-increasing momentum and effectiveness.

COMMON SENSE ADVICE. (356)

Matt. 10: 23; Luke 22: 36.

Dr. Scholl of the Mission Board of the Lutheran Church, in his address to prospective missionaries, upon their equipment, gave advice which has a practical value to all Christians. He said:

"Some things you ought not to expect the Holy Spirit to do for you. If you go to the west coast of Africa you should not expect Him to protect you from the malarial fever if you do not take proper precautions against it. If you go to tropical countries you should not expect Him to ward off the direct rays of the sun from you, if you failed to wear the proper kind of hat, or failed to carry an umbrella. If you fail to throw up a breastwork when Boxer bullets are flying you should not expect Him to keep you from their bad effects. One set of God's laws cannot be disregarded because another set is obeyed. His law of grace does not annul His law of health."

PAUL'S THORN IN THE FLESH. (357)

1 Cor. 15: 32; 2 Cor. 12: 7.

There has been much speculation as to what Paul's thorn in the flesh was. It has been attributed to sore eyes, torpid liver and dyspepsia. He has been cited as an example of the possibilities of a weakly missionary. But it was his enemies who said his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible. For my part I do not believe Paul was the weak-eyed, weak-spined, dyspeptic, pictured by tradition; his thorn in the flesh may not have been pathological at all. It is safe to say that a man who was stoned and left for dead, but who got up and went to work again, who survived stripes and beatings with rods, three shipwrecks, with a day and a night in the deep, was a man of iron constitution. It was not the custom of the Romans to put the weak to fight the strong, for that was not sport. We cannot be sure that Paul had to fight the wild beasts at Ephesus. But if he did, we know he came off victorious.

CROSS LARGE ENOUGH FOR YOU.

Matt. 16: 24; 1 Cor. 9: 27; Gal. 5: 24. (358)

A missionary of the early church told his

companions when he awoke from sleep that he had seen a vision—a blazing cross, alluring him further and further into the wilderness, to tribes untouched by the name of Jesus.

His companions asked him how large a cross it was.

"Large enough to crucify a man on," was the significant reply.

Christian people are called forward to new and larger fields of service, and the beckoning signal is usually a cross—a cross large enough to crucify a man on.

BOAST NOT. (359)

Matt. 18: 23-28; Luke 17: 10; Rom. 3: 27.

Would we think very highly of a man who owed a debt of a thousand dollars if, only after years of good management and saving, he was able to pay five dollars on it? What if he went about boasting of the great things he had accomplished?

One hundred years ago there were one billion of people unsaved in the world. After one hundred years of work there are 995,000,000 of people still unsaved. Yet we congratulate ourselves on the great things we have accomplished!

FAITHFUL UNTO THE END. (360)

Matt. 10: 22 and 28: 19; Luke 6: 46; Rev. 2: 10.

There is a church which sends in its annual statistical statement, year after year, as follows:

Number of members added by baptism..... 0
Number of members added by letter 0
Number of members dismissed by letter ... 5
Number of members who have died..... 3
Amount raised for home missions 0
Amount raised for foreign missions..... 0

Pray for us, brethren, that we continue faithful unto the end.

BORN LAME. (361)

Lam. 3: 27; Hosea 11: 3; Acts 3: 2.

From reasons that necessitated retrenchment, Prebendary H. E. Fox was obliged to remove a missionary to another field. It was in India and Mr. Fox visited the missionary to break the news to him and his converts. They held a service in the little prayer house and after it Mr. Fox told the native people it was necessary to take their dear teacher away from them.

In pitiful consternation they implored him not to deprive them of their light. If he must take this teacher to send some one else from England to them very soon.

Seeing a woman standing by, with her baby on her hip, Mr. Fox called their attention to her. "You see that the mother now has to carry the child. By and by she will put him down on his feet, and he will walk alone." "But, no!" they cried, with Oriental quickness, catching the significance of the image, "We can never walk alone! We were born lame!"

THE SIGNAL BELL. (362)

Matt. 16: 3 and 24: 32, 33.

Awaiting at a railway station the arrival of some friends, my attention was called to a bell. I was told that when the train which bore my friends was within five miles of the station it would run over a pneumatic valve, which would set the bell in the station ringing. I listened eagerly and in a little while I was rewarded by hearing the bell ring furiously. My heart rejoiced to know that my dear ones were only five miles away.

I think Jesus in this age has rung the bell to tell us He is coming.—Bishop Baldwin.

CHRIST'S UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE. (363)

John 10: 27; Acts 2: 11 and 11: 15; 1 John 2: 20.

A Welch girl asked if Christ were not of her people. I told her that Christ was an Israelite of the tribe of Judah.

"Well, I don't know," she said. "When I go to my room and unroll before Him, all my sin and sorrow, he seems to speak to me in Welch 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.'"

KAREN TRADITION. (364)

Is. 55: 5, 11.

The Karens have a tradition that God will sometime take back into favor His erring people, the Karens. It will be, they say, "by means of our white younger brother, who will bring with him a little book, If he come by land, fear him; if by sea, welcome him."

ANTI-DARWINIAN. (365)

Gen. 1: 27; Rom. 1: 19, 20.

My father, when he first went as a missionary to Assam, asked the natives their ideas of the soul and immortality. In substance they replied: "We realize that we are fallen very low, as low as human beings can be; we are not very much better than the monkeys who infest our village and live in our houses. But there is something within us which tells us that we are more than the monkeys and that this life is not all for us and that we shall live hereafter."

HIS FACE TOWARD US. (366)

Num. 6: 25; Acts 10: 35 and 17: 27.

My little lad has his bed down beside mine. One night out of the darkness I heard his voice asking for a drink. After his want was satisfied he asked: "Father, may I sing myself to sleep?" I consented, but was obliged to reverse my decision, for he sang so spiritedly I feared nobody in the house would be able to sleep. He lay there in the dark awhile and then he spoke again, "Father!" "What, little boy?" "Is your face turned toward me?" "Yes, dear little lad." I could fairly feel the

beaming of his countenance in the darkness with the happiness of the thought—as he dropped asleep.

The child of God, with great confidence may turn to Him, under any circumstances, with the certainty that the Great Father's face is always turned toward him.—Robert E. Speer.

MR. MOTT'S ILLUSTRATIONS ON THE NEED AND POWER OF PRAYER. (367)

Matt. 9: 38; Col. 4: 3; 1 Thess. 5: 25; 2 Thess. 3: 1.

Prayer is the greatest need of the missionary enterprise. In my recent tour I met fully twelve hundred missionaries, and without exception their message to the home-land was "Brethren, pray for us!" More than anything else—more than more workers, larger support or better equipment, is the need of faithful prevailing prayer.

FORETHOUGHT. (368)

2 Cor. 1: 11; Phil. 22.

Much of the success of my tour came from the careful planning and setting up of my work at various points by our secretaries and the missionaries. But this could not account for some of our experiences, where results were so remarkable that they filled us with awe and wonder until we remembered the volume of prayer that was going up for us.

My work was attended by the prayer of faithful Christians in scores of American colleges, by many friends in Cambridge and Oxford, by the students of Scandanavia and Germany and by many personal friends who followed the tour according to the schedule provided. Only in the light of this are the results of the tour to be explained.

NEED OF PRAYER. (369)

Rom. 15: 30-32.

Our missionaries often need our prayers most when we think of them least. This is illustrated by my own journey. On October 28th and 29th I was scheduled to make a sea voyage from Nagasaki to Shanghai. But in response to an urgent appeal I had left Japan two days earlier in order to hold a conference in North China with the leaders of the martyred church. No conference of the entire tour was so important. And that was the time when above all other times I craved the prayers of those who were following my tour.

CONSCIENTIOUS. (370)

Col. 1: 3.

I hope we shall become more conscientious about regarding requests for prayer. I have been shamed to recall, after several days sometimes after the critical point is passed, a special request for prayer.

PRAYER-FORCE. (371)

James 5: 16-18.

I believe to the core of my being that prayer is the greatest force we can wield. It is possible for the weakest Christian here to wield great power in prayer. There ought to be five hundred Elijahs now, on Mt. Carmel, praying for missions. The instances of God's answer to our prayers are without number.

FOR CONVERSION. (372)

Ps. 2: 8; John 14: 14.

While in Ceylon I was told of a band of students who were meeting before breakfast to pray for the conversion of their fellow students. It was therefore no surprise to me to hear that there were that day three who became Christians.

It was said that the zenanas of India could not be opened to missionaries; but God swung them open even as the statement was made, in response to the earnest, faithful prayers of the missionaries who desired to enter them.

PRAYER FOR MONEY. (373)

Neh. 1: 11; Ps. 2: 8; John 14: 14.

Dr. Gulick and his wife became deeply impressed with the need of a building for the Young Men's Christian Association in one of the Japanese cities. They began to engage in daily prayer that $2,000 might be furnished by some friend in America. A letter was written to the New York Observer explaining the need. A copy of the paper fell into the hands of a New York business man who threw it on the floor, complaining of the many unreasonable demands. He could not, however, rid his mind of the appeal. The next day he read the article again. The third day he wrote the Observer to ask if the gift had been provided. He had the satisfaction of sending, for four years an annual check of $500 to Dr. and Mrs. Gulick.

Miss Agnew, the well-known missionary teacher, who is called the mother of a thousand girls, besides the duties of teaching and executive work, set aside hours to pray for individual girls by name. It is not surprising that more than a thousand girls became Christians in a few years through association with her.

ANSWER TO PRAYER. (374)

Luke 10: 2, 3, 17; Acts 12: 5-7.

Several years ago the spiritual life of the Doshisha had been on the decline. It was a matter of great concern to Dr. Davis, the president, that so little Christian life was manifest among the students of this missionary college.

He wrote to twenty or thirty colleges and theological schools in America and asked for the prayers of professors and Christian students. These prayers were to culminate on a certain date. A few days before, Dr. Davis learned that the students of their own accord had been gathering in the dormitories to talk of Christianity and to pray. On the very day to which these American colleges had been looking forward a spiritual awakening began, which swept the Doshisha.

SPECIFIC PRAYER. (375)

John 15: 7.

In the history of the China Inland Mission it is noted that Dr. Hudson Taylor had the number of their missionaries increased by fifty in response to their prayers. To send out fifty additional missionaries required an increase in their budget of $50,000. As there was no time to gather this amount in small donations, prayer was offered that if it be the will of God this amount might come in in a few large gifts. Within one year the entire amount was subscribed by eleven people.

INCIDENT OF THE RIOTS OF CHINA. (376)

Acts 12: 5.

Dr. Gamewell, who led the defense of Pekin, led six thousand native Christians and missionaries through lines of infuriated Boxers out of Pekin to a place of safety. When asked how they could have run this fearful gauntlet unharmed, he said upon that day bands of Christians were united in prayer for them in the churches of America.

THE KIND OF CHRISTIANS THE CHINESE MAKE. (377)

Rev. 2: 9, 10 and 7: 13, 14.

Rev. Dr. Ament of China stated that although it was impossible to give exact figures, 30,000 native Christians were put to death in the year 1900. The Chinese Church was now a martyred church, but its face was toward the future. The fortitude of the martyrs created a profound impression in many places. Dr. Ament gave instances of Chinese who had united with the church directly after witnessing the violent death of confessing Christians.

NINETY AND NINE SAFE. (378)

Luke 10: 20; Rev. 2: 9.

The roll-book of one church was secured by the Boxers and each of the one hundred members was visited. Freedom and property was assured these members if they would renounce their Christianity. Although loss of property and probably of life was meant by refusal, only one member recanted.

CHINESE STEPHEN. (379)

Acts 7: 54-60.

One man endeavored to escape to a neighboring town to warn the missionaries there of the approach of the Boxers. He was caught on the way by a band and asked if he were a Christian. He cried out that he was, and to that enraged mob he preached Christ. He was warned that if he did not desist his tongue would be cut out and the threat was carried out. His last act, as his tormentors hacked him to death, was to point steadfastly, triumphantly upward.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ADDRESS OF MR. W. R. HOTCHKISS, FRIEND MISSIONARY TO AFRICA. (380)

Acts 17: 30; Titus 2: 11.

The Africans in the Bush have their eyebrows shaved, eye-winkers pulled, teeth filed to a point, ears pierced and the openings made gradually larger until they hold a pound tin-can which they use to carry their trinkets in. Yet bestial as they are, every man has the possibility and promise of redemption.

AMERICA'S? (381)

Acts 16: 9.

Will you look at the map of Africa! It is a gigantic interrogation point. It is pointing toward the West. It is pointing toward America. It is asking "Why are we left in darkness?" It is a gigantic ear. It is waiting, listening, straining for the only message that can transform its desert into a garden of the Lord.

HEATHEN AND CHRISTIAN. (382)

Ps. 74: 20; Prov. 12: 10; Luke 16: 20, 21.

On an exploration tour in the jungles of Africa an urgent call to return to the settlement was brought to me. One of the native men of my party was violently ill and it was well nigh impossible for me to leave him. The jungle was infested with wild beasts and the man was mortally ill. I had to leave him to the care of his three companions. I left them all the provisions and charged them on no account to leave the sick man a moment.

The next afternoon the three men entered my hut. They were hungry, they said, and the food gone.

"Did you leave the sick man alone?" I asked, in horror.

"He was about to die any way. It was as well for the beasts to have him," they said.

"Is that the way the black men treat their brothers?" I said.

"Yes, it was their custom."

"It is not the way the white men treat their brothers," I said.

Hoping against hope, I set out to reach the poor unfortunate, but the way was long and when I arrived the hut was empty. Out in the soft sand was the impression made by a man's body, where the wretched creature had dragged himself to wet his fevered lips. Around it in horrid suggestiveness were the prints of the feet of lions and hyenas—and that was all.

You revolt from the inhumanity that, for convenience or appetite, leaves a fellow man to such a gruesome death. Yet many Christians find convenience or gain or pleasure an excuse for complete disregard of the helpless and sin-sick people of this darkened land. You and I have feasted on the dainties of the Lord's table while 700,000,000 Lazaruses are starving for the crumbs. So much better as Heaven is than earth, so is heavenly bread more precious than earthly.

"SAVIOUR." (383)

Matt. 1: 21; John 3: 17; Acts 4: 12.

When I went to Africa there was no written language, so I was forced to learn here a little and there a little from the conversation of the natives. One word I listened for and never heard. Two years and a half went by and it seemed as if I never would have results until I found that word.

One night I heard some of the men telling stories of adventures. One related how his master had rescued him from a lion. I listened eagerly, hoping to catch the word—the long-sought word. The incident was finished, the word was not spoken; my hope was crushed, my heart was sick. After we broke up I called the man and asked him "What did you call your master when he saved you from the lion?" At once he gave me the longed-for word—the word which means Saviour; and I was able for the first time to make clear to him what the Saviour would be to him. With joy on his face he caught the message, as he exclaimed, "Is that what you have been trying to tell us all this time!"

I spent four years in Africa. For fourteen months I never saw bread; for months I have lived on African beans and sour milk; I have eaten everything from ants to rhinoceri; thirty times I had fever; I have been attacked by native bands; three times I have been attacked by lions, and four times by rhinoceri; but I would go through it all again for the ineffable joy of that moment when I heard the word Saviour and saw the light of that man's face at the message it conveyed to him!

INCIDENT OF THE CHINESE RIOTS.

Acts 5: 41; Rom. 8: 17; Phil. 3: 10. (384)

During the recent trouble in China I, with some of the other missionaries, was in one of the greatest riots short of a massacre. We were driven from the city and stoned. Bruised and wounded, the realization suddenly came to us that we had been permitted to suffer for Christ. We had learned the blessedness of sharing in His sufferings. For four days and four nights we hardly knew whether we were in Heaven or on earth for the happiness we felt in this consciousness.

Jesus calls us to come and suffer with Him. When we get to Heaven we can serve Him, but only on earth can we suffer for Him. "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering."—Mrs. Howard Taylor.

TRENCHANT SAYINGS. (385)

The Prince Consort Albert once said: "Find out the plan of God for our own generation; find out your relation to it, and fall into that relation."

By the power of the Holy Ghost a thousand years ago, Bonafacius transformed the savage tribes of Northern Europe to a Christian people which is now one of the great factors of civilization. By the same power the British Isles were changed from their primitive wild state to be the garden spot of the world.

"Every Friend ought to light up the community for ten miles," said George Fox. Every Christian ought to have that illuminating power. If not congested, but spread over the earth, the light of God would soon shine to every creature.

To have a strong body is as important as to have the mind of a sage and the soul of a saint.

Archbishop Whitely has said: "If my faith is wrong I am bound to change it; if it is right I am bound to propagate it."

"The narrow way," says John Bunyan in Grace Abounding, "has room for the body and soul; but not for body, soul and sin."

If you believe in Jesus Christ you must believe in missions. If you do not you cannot believe in missions, for Christ came on a mission.

STUDIES IN NEGLECTED TEXTS,

Appropriate for Spring.

BY REV. G. B. F. HALLOCK, D. D.

SPRINGTIME—GOOD SEED TO SOW.

"The seed is the word of God."—Luke 8: 21.

It is the time of seed sowing. Many minds are turned toward thoughts of the soil, the seed, the result of sowing, in gardens, flowerbeds and farms. The season brings its spiritual lessons. Christ used the scene of the sower going forth to sow to teach His hearers. Let us take one little suggestion He made at the time as teaching us a lesson. "The seed is the Word of God." Let us think about sowing this seed.

I. It is good seed to sow in your family. And he is a wise man who daily gathers his loved ones about the home altar and sows this precious seed in the family. It will bring untold blessings, both spiritual and temporal, to himself and to his dear ones. The harvest will be rich.

II. It is good seed to sow in your community. And it is a happy community where the Word of God is faithfully studied and preached and taught. Life is safe in that community. Property is more valuable. Business is more profitable. Schools are better. Children are more intelligent; and homes and hearts are happier in that community. The harvest is very rich. It costs less and pays better than constables, police officers, and jails, and the fruit is infinitely better.

III. It is good seed to sow in the nation. And "happy is the nation whose God is the Lord," where God's Word is believed and taught and lived. It is the only sure cure for anarchy, and socialism, communism and

crime. Better than standing armies; better than musketry and powder; better than courts and prisons is the harvest that comes from sowing this seed. It is making the tree good in order to have the fruit good. It is cleansing the fountain to make the stream pure. It is the ounce of prevention worth the pound of cure. It is that wisest of strategy by pre-occupation—possessing the ground with good, and so keeping out evil. The harvest is rich and abundant.

IV. This seed has life in itself. You only need to scatter it and it will grow. "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth, upon the tops of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." This is the seed which, if sown, "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose." Its blossom is beautiful, like the lily of the valley or the rose of Sharon; its fruit is satisfying, like manna from heaven or the "Bread of Life."

V. The harvest is not only rich but sure. Do you want good, reliable seed to sow? Then here it is—the Word of God. "The Word of the Lord is tried," and stands the test of both reason and experiment. If you would have real, reliable, well tested seed, then that seed is this "Word of God." For seed and sowing, for flowering and fruitage, in it none have ever been disappointed nor ever shall be.

LESSONS FROM SEED-SOWING.

"Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.—Gal. 6: 7.

This is the season of sowing. It is important what we sow. Like produces like, whether we sow seed or sin. The law of sowing and reaping is invariable also in the moral and spiritual realm. Do men therefore use the same common sense in making preparation for the spiritual as for the natural harvest? Let us go out into the fields and see. Here are men sowing. They are walking, and at every step they are scattering seed—sowing as they go. What shall the harvest be?

I. Here is a worldly man sowing. He is very busy sowing. He sows the seeds of the world. He reaps of the same a golden harvest. The man can truly say, "Soul, thou hast much goods." But the "goods" are only such as can be laid up for time, not for eternity. O foolish man, did you not forget the spiritual harvest? This night thy soul, goods and all, may be required of thee. Poor man, he sowed but one kind of seed. What he got was all of that same kind; and a man "cannot live by bread alone."

II. But here we come upon another man sowing; here is an intemperate man sowing.

You thought he would be staggering as he sows; but no, he walks as straight as any man, but as he walks he sows. It really seems pleasant at first. He finds delight in it—only a little exhilaration, and the ground is so smooth! But he goes on. By and by he begins to wonder whether the pleasure has gone. He begins to feel nervous; his reason reproves him; his conscience twitches him; he begins to feel quite uneasy, for he finds that he can scarcely get along without his cups. But why does he not stop? He does not stop. He goes on. He says, "I wish I had never begun." He feels that he is daily degrading himself lower and lower—yet he goes on to sickness, disease, poverty, friendlessness, a drunkard's woe, and a drunkard's grave.

There is another stage lower, but it is too awful to behold, so it is veiled from human eyes—"No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God."

III. Here, too, is another sowing—the fields are so many—it is the season of sowing—here is a pleasure-seeker sowing. He has a pleasant, cheerful smile. He says, "I am not working hard, and I find it very pleasant." There are a great many sowing here. Yes, and though really sowing those seeds of sin, "wild oats," not a few professed disciples of Christ are among the sowers.

Now, God wants His children to be happy, but He does not want them to choose such ways to seeming happiness as soil the soul. Besides, the one who sows simply to pleasure gains nothing by it. When you devote yourself to the world and its pleasures you will find that even this will lose its charm, and after you have once "gone the rounds," you can only do as the horse at the mill, travel the same ground over again. Every pleasure becomes "old." You go flitting from flower to flower, but getting honey from none. You find life a burden, yourself an old, jaded out pleasure-seeker, possibly a financial and physical wreck, and at the sunset of life you realize, if not before, that you have indeed sown to the "wind" and are reaping, and can only expect to reap the "whirlwind."

IV. But here is another sower: Here is a Christian sowing. There is an earnest but hopeful look in his face as he sows. He has heard the promise that seed time and harvest shall not fail. He has heard that "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Sowing to the Spirit, the Christian reaps present and eternal joy.

V. But here is still another sower—one other. It is hardly fair to call him a sower—but he is intending to sow.

The trouble is that he doesn't sow. Some one has said that the way to hell is paved with good intentions. There are multitudes of people intending to sow to the Spirit, but they are putting it off from day to day. Spring-time is slipping away. You cannot make garden in the fall. Every day you put it off makes it more likely you will put it off another. There is little difference in the final result, whether you sow bad seed or no seed. When you come to your time of hunger you will have no bread and must starve.

BUSINESS AND RELIGION COMBINED.

"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."—Rom. 12: 11.

It is false to affirm that Christianity is a life and not a doctrine. It is equally false to say that Christianity is a doctrine and not a life. The fact is, it is both a doctrine and a life. The very purpose of the revelation of the doc-

trine is to lead to the kind of life the doctrine teaches.

No idler can be a high-type Christian. God intended that we should be not slothful in business, at the same time fervent in spirit, thus serving the Lord. And we can serve Him best thus. Industry has more blessings than idleness. It is conducive to health, wealth, happiness, and, honestly pursued, to growth in Christian character.

I. The relation between religion and business is not one of antagonism. Men plead the pressure of business as an excuse for want of interest in spiritual things. But let us remember that in order to be a first-rate business man does not involve being a fourth or fifth-rate Christian. In order to enrich oneself at trade, it is not necessary to starve oneself at religion. Work and worship are not opposed.

II. The relation between religion and business is not one of separation. Business does not require a man, when he shuts his pew door on Sunday, to say good-bye to his religion for another week. It is not true that Sunday is the day for religion, and the other six days are the days for business. All our days are days for religion. Religion has business with business. Business has business with religion.

III. The relation is one of combination. Not slothful in business, at the same time fervent in spirit. That religion is worthless which leaves out business. If a man will not work, neither shall he eat. If a man provide not for his own household, he is worse than an infidel, and has denied the faith. That business is wicked which leaves out religion. It will cheat, and bribe, and crush the poor. The only proper way is the combination of the two.

There are ways in which godliness helps business. "Godliness is profitable in all things." Godliness makes a man honest. Godliness makes a man industrious and earnest. Godliness makes a man prudent and thoughtful. Godliness makes a man firm and decided. A Christian must be able to say, No, and mean No, and say Yes, and mean Yes. On the other hand, business helps religion. Business is a school of knowledge. It is a school of patience. It tests, and therefore strengthens, our graces. It is a school of integrity. It is a source of wealth, which may be consecrated to religion. "What God has joined let no man put asunder." These things God hath joined, work and worship, religion and business. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

"LOVEST THOU ME?"

John 21: 16.

I. Consider the feelings of a true Christian toward Christ. A true Christian is not simply a baptized person, a church member, a respecter of religion, but he is a person who has some definite relations toward Christ. He trusts Christ as his only hope of salvation. He hopes in Christ as the one who fulfills his expectations. He follows Christ as his example and the one who will lead him to heaven. And, above all, he loves Christ; he has a personal attachment to Him, and a delight in Him, in His will, in His cause, in His successes.

Love, indeed, is the mainspring of all service for Christ. The heart must be enlisted before the hands will move. The true Christian says: "The love of Christ constraineth me." Where this love is lacking there may be, indeed, excitement, enlistment, interest for a time, but no patient continuance in well doing. Love is the secret of the Christian's persistence in well doing. The soldier fights best who has love for a commander, or a cause. There may be, and usually is, a great difference between the interest of a nurse who, as a stranger, is employed to care for a sick child and the feelings and attention of the mother. It is love that constrains the mother and leads to highest devotion.

II. How this love to Christ makes itself known.

1. If we love Him we will like to think about Him. It is the characteristic of love that it likes to dwell in thought upon the object of its love. So a true Christian will not forget Christ, Christ's wishes, Christ's name, Christ's honor. Love will bring often recurring thoughts of our Savior and attention to His will.

2. If we love Him we will be glad to hear about Him. We like to hear of those whom we love.

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear."

3. If we love Him we will be glad to read about Him. We always rejoice to receive a message from an absent child, a husband, or friend. So the message Christ sends will be the Christian's delight.

4. If we love Him we will try to please Him. This is a trait of love; it always considers what will gratify the loved one. If we love Him we will try to do the things He will approve. We will strive not to do things He disapproves. Love does not murmur that Christ's requirements are strict; it is scarcely aware that they are: "The yoke is easy and the burden light." This is because of love.

5. If you love Him you will love His friends. This is a well known trait of love. We will love our friends' friends.

6. If we love Him we will be careful of His good name and honor. This is another universal sign of love.

7. If we love Him we will love to talk to Him, and be with Him. This is why Christians go to places where He is found. It is also a reason why they look forward with delight toward heaven.

Test yourselves. Do you love Him?

All silently, and soft as sleep,
The snow fell, flake on flake.

Slumber, spent Earth! and dream of flowers
Till spring-time bid you wake.

Again the deadened bough shall bend
With blooms of sweetest breath.

O miracle of miracles,
This life that follows death!

—Thomas Bailey Aldrich, in Harper's Monthly for December.

UNUSUAL.

The congregation in question had not paid the preacher's salary for six months, and when he mildly protested they promptly called his attention to the donation party they had given him. Some were business men who were behind in their payments. They were using the money due the preacher to make more—the kind of business men who smile at the preacher's lack of financial ability, and point to the fact that he is always in debt. That was the condition when the preacher died, and went to heaven. Several preachers passed along before him, and each was greeted by a number of his flock. When this preacher stepped up he was asked if any of his sheep were there. He sadly shook his head and said, "My sheep were all hogs."

A minister in a Kansas town regretfully learned that the church collections were diminishing in amount. On a recent Sunday he informed his congregation just before the plates were passed around that the members who were in debt were not expected to contribute. To his delight he later was informed that the collection was double the usual sum.

"If preachers would only keep in mind that they are working for God, maybe there would be less complaining about poor salaries," an exchange remarks acridly. Yes. And if congregations would only keep in mind that, when they owe the preacher, they are in debt to the Master, for whom he is laboring, maybe there would be less shameless stinginess displayed in church finances.

"I am Elijah," says "Dr." Dowie. One difference that suggests itself is that, whereas Elijah was fed by the ravens, Dowie is fed by the gulls.—New York Herald.

A gentleman who employs a great number of hands in a manufactory in the west of England, in order to encourage his work people in a due attendance at church on a Fast day, told them, that if they went to church they would receive their wages for that day, in the same manner as if they had been at work. Upon which a deputation was appointed to acquaint their employer, that "if he would pay them for over hours, they would attend likewise at the Methodist chapel in the evening!"

At the battle of Dettingen, as Lord Townsend, then a young man, was marching down pretty close to the enemy, he was observed to be so very thoughtful (as is usual with most officers on their first battle) as to take no notice of a drummer's head that was shot off just before him, though he received some of the brains on his coat. A veteran officer observing this, went up to him and endeavored to rouse him, by telling him the best way in these cases was not to think at all. "Oh! dear sir," says the other, with great presence of mind, "you entirely mistake my reverie; I have been only thinking what the devil could bring this little drummer here, who seemed to possess such a quantity of brains." Fellows with as much brains as the drummer boy put themselves in more danger than he by moderate drinking, gambling, etc.

A converted miner was preaching on a box on a street corner, with an open Bible in his hand. He was a great brawny fellow, and was talking in great earnestness, when a well-dressed young fellow came up, listened a moment, and spoke loud enough for all to hear: "You are crazy, man. Don't you know that Book is a pack of lies." He expected that he would embarrass the miner. But with his same earnestness he called to the young man to come up on the box, and as the miner could enforce his command, he was obeyed. He then handed him the Bible, and said, "Now turn to Hebrews 9:27." He fumbled around awhile (and if you want to confuse nine out of ten agnostics, ask them to find something in the Bible) and finally gave it up. "Oho," says the miner, "you know so much about the book, you ought to know where to find that." And then he found it for him. "Now read it." "And it is appointed unto men, once to die,—"

"Stop!" thundered the miner, adding, "Now tell these men if that is a lie. Don't men have to die?" The infidel had nothing to say to the smiling crowd, and the miner told him to read the second clause.

"But after this the judgment—"

"Now," said the miner, "the first part is true. It wouldn't be surprising if the second part was true. And, anyhow, it is better to live as if it were."

(You can then read the 28th verse, adding, is there anything fearsome about that, the man the children loved in Galilee, the man who cured so many. Only those who are under judgment, or fear him as judge, are afraid of that verse. He appears to those who look for him. What if, according to some, eternal life is for those only who seek for it, those who value it. Eternal death would be worse than hell. Do you want your life to go out like a lamp, like a dog's? No! Then lay hold on eternal life.)

I gone fer ter seek fer my peace er min'—
  I kneel in de grass en dew;
But de gray owl say f'um 'cross de way—
F'um de ol' dead pine whar' de ol' ha'nt stay:
  "Who—who—is—you?"

En I tell 'im, "Lawd, hit's des po' me,
  En I ain't no better dan you 'lowed I'd be;
En I pray f'um Satan dat you'll set me free,
  F'um de night-time 'twell de mawnin'!"

I gone ter seek fer my peace er min',
  En de peace er my fambly, too;
But de gray owl call f'um de ol' chu'ch wall:
"I dunno nuttin' 'bout you at all—
  Who—who—is—you?"

En I tell' im, "Lawd, I des so po'
  Dat dey ain't no number on my do'!
En I wish you'd try me, Lawd, once mo',
  F'um de night-time 'twell de mawnin'!"

—Frank L. Stanton, Saturday Evening Post.

CURRENT ANECDOTES

A paper furnishing illustrations and their morals, for religious public speakers.

(Incorporating Cut Gems, Troy, N. Y.)

PUBLISHED BY

CURRENT ANECDOTES CO.

617-625 Rose Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio.

SUBSCRIPTION: { In U.S., Canada and Mexico, $1.50 PER YEAR.

Foreign Subscriptions, 25c. extra, for postage.

[COPYRIGHTED BY CURRENT ANECDOTES CO., 1901.]

Entered at the Post Office at Cleveland, O., as second class matter.

Issued **APRIL, 1902** **Monthly**

$1.50 for an Anecdote or Illustration.

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The following illustration on "Conscience," by Sylvanus Stall, is a splendid example:

In conversation with Sylvanus Stall, author of the purity books that have done a world of good, he told me of how he began preaching his object sermons, and then related one on conscience, the best illustration I ever heard. He was going along the road to an appointment one day, and having been busy had not prepared. He came to where men were threshing and the text "Like the chaff which the wind driveth away" came to him. He gathered up some chaff and wheat and went on his way rejoicing. The sermon was so effective that he commenced using them regularly. One time it would be two apples, one sound and one wormy. He would cut them and of the wormy one, he would ask how the worm got into the apple. "Ate its way in." "Wrong! An insect stung the blossom, and when the apple was grown the worm that resulted from the sting or egg left when the insect stung it, ate its way out." This was used to illustrate original sin. But the best was his illustration of conscience. He used it like this:

"CONSCIENCE."

"When I was a boy in Eastern New York peddlers would bring oysters in little kegs and mother would make soup of them. One day I found a little red thing in the soup, and I didn't know if it were by mistake or whether mother put it in to flavor the soup."

Here the children smile and volunteer the information that it was a crab; if its in an oyster country.

"Well, how did the crab get in with the oysters? I'll tell you. You know an oyster has no eyes, nor ears, only knows things by feeling, and that isn't much protection, for you can hear and see danger in time to get out of the way, but by the time you feel it, often it is too late. When an oyster wants to eat or when it wants to enjoy the water that comes by with the tide it opens its shell. Along comes a hungry fish and grabs him out of his shell, and he is gone before he has time to close up.

"Now, the little crab has no shell, and though he can see and hear, he gets snapped up like the oyster. For protection he crawls into the oyster shell and they get along very peaceably, and when a hungry fish comes along the little crab sees him and pinches the oyster and the oyster shuts his shell and both are safe. He would be a foolish oyster if he paid no attention to the crab's pinch, and leave his shell open, just to see what would happen, wouldn't he?"

"Did you ever see temptation, or sin?" You have seen only their results. But each one has a little crab inside, and when temptation comes the little crab pinches, and when sin comes he pinches harder, and he bothers us, but if we pay no attention by and by he doesn't pinch—he finds it does no good."

UNUSUAL—Continued.

A countryman sowing his ground, two smart fellows riding that way, one of them called to him with an insolent air, "Well, honest fellow," said he, "'tis your business to sow, but we reap the fruits of your labor." To which the countryman replied, "'Tis very like you may, for I am sowing hemp."

Mr. Spurgeon, the famous London preacher, being asked whether a man could be a Christian and belong to a brass band, replied, "Yes, I think he might; but it would be a very difficult matter for his next door neighbor to be a Christian."

Wife: "Do you think Tommy disturbs our neighbor with his drum?"

Husband: "I'm afraid so; the man next door made him a present of a nice new knife today, and suggested that Tommy should cut open the drum and spend the money that is inside."

THE GOSPEL OUT OF DOORS.

An Answer to the Prayer to Reach the People.

Open Air Services.

*By Donald M. Grant, Pastor Case Avenue Presbyterian Church, Cleveland, Ohio.

*Note—This article by Mr. Grant was written last fall, and was reserved until now that it might be more timely. His prophecy was fulfilled in a marked way March 14, by the pastor of the leading Baptist Church in Cleveland, John D. Rockefeller's church, going to the Public Square, and preaching the gospel. The following Sunday he noticed some of his open-air listeners in his congregation. See article following this.

Announcement—If there is sufficient interest (send me a postal card if you would be interested) a series of articles on open-air preaching; what and what not to do, will be presented in the May, June and July numbers.—Editor.

In many instances the work of the church during the summer, if carried on at all, is of such a character as to bring a cynical smile to the face of the irreligious, and a feeling of real concern to those who are anxious to see her move on with steady and unbroken zeal. All the departments of the Church—the Sunday School, the Young People's Societies, the Women's organizations, the prayer meetings and the preaching services on the Lord's Day, suffer greatly from the fact that so many of the regular and devoted workers are away for the summer. The conditions of city life are such that the constant business strain becomes unbearable, and rest is only secured by a complete removal for a time from the accustomed place. And yet notwithstanding the fact that you see your churches and schools thinning out and many of your most active workers leaving you in June not to return till September, and in many instances not until October or November, is there not something greatly needed? It was with a very strong conviction that not only was there something greatly needed, but also that this something was within reach, that the writer, after securing the hearty co-operation of his session, decided upon an entirely different plan to that heretofore followed.

It had been our custom, as with many other city churches, to close our doors in the evening during the months of July, August and September. Last year we held, during that period, open-air services every Sunday evening, and with somewhat gratifying results. The attendance in August was nearly double that of May and June, and with but little in the way of special attractions. I believe that many other churches might have had like results, and on a much larger scale, had similar plans been pursued.

We were fortunate in securing the use of a rear lot adjoining the Church, which we made as attractive as possible by seating it with chairs from the lecture room, and lighting it with gasoline torches. The regular choir of the Church led the audience in the service of song. We even had the congregation join in the Responsive Readings. The services were held without any tent, and the people seemed to catch an added inspiration as they looked up into the starry and moon-lit heavens, and at the same time enjoyed the cool evening zephyrs which could not be secured beneath the folds of a tent.

If I were to conduct such services next summer, and it is my strong conviction that I shall, I think I would follow a somewhat different plan. Instead of going to a lot in the rear, it has already been suggested by my elders that we make the Church steps answer for a pulpit, letting the people congregate upon the lawn between the Church and street. This would give one a greater vantage-ground from which to reach the people on either side of the street, who might not be sufficiently interested to leave their comfortable chair or hammock on the veranda. It would also catch the passer-by. I need not say to the present reader that such methods were in vogue in our Savior's day. Read the Gospels with but the average attention and you will see how seldom our Lord spoke from the consecrated desk in the synagogue, and how frequently he used the fisherman's boat, the resting-stone by the well, the teller's wicket of a large and flourishing bank, and similar places, from which to deliver his life-saving and soul-satisfying message.

I would also try to have special music—say for instance, a good cornetist, or even a full orchestra. Many would come to hear the music who would remain for the sermon, and in this way might be influenced to begin a new life.

I think it was wise, as far as practicable, to hold the service as near to the Church as possible. In the first place it is convenient. If a storm should occur during the service you would have some place to shelter the people. But especially is it well to be near the Church should you desire to give an invitation to any who were interested to go with you to an after-meeting. There might be times, however, when the Church wished to extend her influence beyond her immediate bounds, in such a case it would be necessary to hold a meeting entirely separated from the Church building. If a vacant lot could be secured for the summer it would be well to have the same enclosed. This would lessen annoyance from a certain class always to be found about such places.

One great need in such work is the ready response of consecrated workers, a few of whom may usually be found in every Church even at this season of the year.

Another feature I hope to adopt is a Children's Chorus. If you can secure a dozen or more boys and girls under a competent leader they will add greatly to the service of song, and at the same time bring many of their friends to the meeting.

Is it necessary to say a word about the preacher and his preaching? I do not say that every man ought to attempt open-air work. Don't do it because someone else has done it and has made a success of it. Feel that you must do it whether anyone else does or not, and in spite of the fact that everyone else who ever tried it may have failed. You have a message which you believe God wants the man who does not go to Church to hear. That man may be within the sound of your voice as you stand upon the doorstep of your Church, or upon some vacant lot, but would not hear you

if you stood within the walls of your Church. The preaching should be pointed and plain—no discussion of complex philosophical or theological questions, but a straightforward and earnest presentation of the simple, yet marvelously profound truths concerning sin and ruin by the fall and complete redemption by the Atonement made by Jesus Christ. Remember that you are fishing for men. Keep in mind the fact that men are lost unless they believe in Jesus Christ. PREACH to them, SING to them and PRAY for them. If they do not come thronging into the kingdom, don't give up. If you faithfully and lovingly declare the Word, God will take care of the results.

I might speak of a union open-air service as has been carried on in Philadelphia, New York and other cities under what is known as the "Tent Movement," but as this has been written about so frequently by those more familiar with its workings, I need scarcely do more than refer to it. It is much the same as that carried on by the individual Church, only on a larger scale.

May I be allowed to assume the role of a prophet, if but for a moment? I believe the day is not far distant when we shall see many of our churches obeying practically the command of our Lord and following His methods in the work of saving souls. "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." And "He went about continually doing good." The Church, "which is His body," is not merely a hospital into which we carry the wounded and dying, but a barracks, a training school, an arsenal from which we send gallant soldiers right into the enemy's ranks to bring captive as many as shall be found.

If what I have written will in any way incite to greater activity the ministers and officers of the various churches, I shall feel that my effort has not been in vain.

CHARLES A. EATON, D. D., PREACHES IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE, CLEVELAND.

In a recent Sunday morning sermon Dr. C. A. Eaton said that he would from time on some week-day preach on the Public Square. His first service was held the following Friday noon. I quote from the account in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, as the impressions of a reporter are more apt to coincide with public opinion than not:

There was nothing lost in dignity when Dr. Charles A. Eaton mounted a soap box on the Public Square at noon yesterday and for nearly a half hour talked plain religion for busy people to a crowd of hundreds who were attracted to the scene.

There was the same simple earnestness in the man in the rain coat and latest style of Panama hat as there is in the black-coated pastor, who each week preaches in the pulpit of the church which might boast as its chief founder the wealthiest man in the world.

The crowd gathered when the pastor, with a smile, stepped upon a rough soap box in order that the slight elevation might give his voice range over the crowd, and said, "We will begin our service." Before him was gathered as mingled a set of men and women as he might desire if his ambition was to come in contact with every phase of social life. There was the prosperous business man, the director of large commercial affairs, who, on his way from his office, stopped to listen. Beside them stood the workmen from the streets, who were taking their noon rest, while in the throng were shop girls, church working women, who came especially to attend the meeting, while a little newsboy unconcernedly appropriated a small portion of the soap box as a seat.

"They are tearing away that building there," began Dr. Eaton, pointing to the postoffice building. "It is being torn away because it no longer meets the needs of the people. Upon its ruins will be erected a new structure, magnificent and equipped for the purposes to which it will be put.

"It occurs to me that our religious life needs a reconstruction. The church has been following lines in its efforts to carry the messages of truth that were laid down years and centuries ago, that were made for different conditions. The times have changed, people think differently and the only part of the religion which seems to fit well is that inner principle of saving truth, that divineness, that sight of God which makes it eternal. But even this message can be hampered and kept back by being presented in a cramped manner.

"I am here because I want to bring the truth to the people. You shall listen to the message and as far as I can be used I intend to see that no man or woman in this city shall have an opportunity of accusing the churches of forsaking them. The people of Cleveland shall hear me and listen to my message. These meetings will be held after the weather gets warmer. They will be conducted systematically and I hope to see them the beginning of a great popular movement.

"The people want good things, and for one I believe in giving them good things. I am glad that Cleveland has her parks. I hope that she will have more of them and that they will be conducted so that the people can best enjoy them. I believe in bringing music to the lives of people and the popular concerts are a good thing. But I come because I have something which is better than the parks, better than the music. It is the message of truth which shall save men from themselves, which will lead them into a sphere of life where the enjoyment is not of the moment and where the results are for eternity, not for an hour. May this message become as popular as is the concert or the parks.

"I bring the message today which I want to bring to Cleveland in this manner. It is the old message, the story of the sacrifice and divine life of a Father who bids His children follow His wise commands. It is the message which you need, which will make your religion broader. You are too narrow now, for your religion is good citizenship and the paying of your bills. Accept this truth and get beyond that idea. You must pay your bills; you must be good citizens; but what are you to say when the end is at hand? You need it now as a light to your lives."

For half an hour the pastor continued his plea. No one left the crowd, and it was being

constantly added to, until, when the pastor stepped from the box and said that the meeting was over, there were several hundreds standing about him. Some pressed forward to grasp his hand; others stopped to comment with their neighbors. An incident then occurred which held the crowd. A workman from the federal building stepped on to the box, and for a few minutes told of his life story, of his fallen state of drunkenness and of the waste of seventeen years, much of which time was spent in the police station.

"I was changed in a meeting just like this one," he said. "Listen to the words, for he tells the truth that may change some of you from drunkards to good citizens, from lost wretches to happy men."

PREACHING IN PITTSBURG PARKS.

Open air preaching by a prominent minister was successfully carried on three years ago in Atlanta, but one of the most successful efforts was that made by Rev. S. Edward Young at Schenley Park, Pittsburg, and published in the Christian Herald last summer:

Schenley Park is an ideal place for large public gatherings, with an elevated platform, or stage, equipped with a perfect sounding-board. It is lighted by 150 electric lights. Seats for 20,000 people can be placed, and as many more can hear fairly well from the groves and hillsides surrounding. For three seasons Rev. Mr. Young held a series of preaching services in this music pavilion, with marked success, the estimated average attendance being from eight thousand to ten thousand, the largest attendance being between eighteen thousand and twenty thousand, while the smallest was a few hundreds, who, in spite of a heavy rain, sat on the backs of the seats and listened as long as the services lasted.

The marked cosmopolitan nature of these audiences was shown in the large number of foreigners present. At every service can be seen Chinese, Slavs, Greeks, Hungarians, Italians, Armenians, many with their entire families. The roadway surrounding the pavilion is always lined with well-filled carriages belonging to well-to-do Americans. The open-air preaching is preceded by a song service, led by a large chorus choir of eighty voices, accompanied by either a full orchestra or full brass band. The hymns used were printed on single slips and distributed to all within reach. Solo singing by the best available talent was made a feature of the work. The usual order of church worship was observed, except, perhaps, the recitation by the people of some pointed verse or verses of Scripture, which were "lined out" by the pastor until they learned them. Before dismissing the audience, Mr. Young makes an appeal for those wishing to be Christians or to be prayed for, to hold up their hands. This is responded to by large numbers, sometimes literally by hundreds.

A new feature the last season was a large tent, seating 600 to 800, placed at the rear of the seats, in which an "after meeting" was held. The tent was generally filled, while large numbers stand around outside. Cards were distributed for the purpose of ascertaining church preference, and frequently it was half past ten o'clock before pastor and workers started for home.

Park and city officials rendered all the aid possible. This led Mr. Young to plan the holding of Sunday preaching services in each of the city parks and the three traction parks situated in the suburbs. The managers of the traction companies agreed to close all secular entertainments for the day, and to permit Mr. Young to arrange a series of preaching services in the traction parks. Services were also arranged for Schenley and Highland Parks. Seven pastors of the Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist, Dutch Reformed and United Presbyterian denominations, were enlisted, and it was estimated that 40,000 people heard the Gospel preached. By far, the largest proportion were non-church goers. The Christian Endeavor Society, of the Second Church, conducted a prayer service in the tent, previous to the other services.

[P. S. by the Editor—The efforts mentioned were all made in the city. It would be more convenient but probably more difficult to do the same thing in town or country churches, as new movements find more objection in towns than in cities. Do you know of open-air work in towns or country? If so, write me.]

THE GOSPEL IN THE OPEN AIR.

BY A. C. DIXON, D. D.

We find our first parents in a garden. The law was given from Sinai and its curses were emphasized from the top of Ebal in the open air. The great revival under Ezra began in the open air, as from his pulpit of wood he read the Scriptures and expounded their meaning. The angels gave a snatch of heaven's music and announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds in the open air. Christ preached his greatest sermon in the open air, and proclaimed the gospel to the woman by Jacob's well in the open air. Indeed, most of his miracles and teaching took place in the open air. He did not shun the synagogue, nor the upper room, but he delighted in the freedom of the street, the mountain, and the plain. His disciples were chosen in the open air. The Apostle Paul was converted in the open air, and no wonder he became all through his life an open-air preacher, proclaiming from Mars' Hill Jesus and the resurrection, and pressing into the market-places where the people thronged. Jesus was crucified in the open air, and from the top of Olivet he ascended in the open air. In like manner he shall return with the glory of his Father and the angels in the open air.

The first mention of church houses is found in the writings of Tertullian at the end of the second century. Justin Martyr was converted by the testimony of an old man preaching in the open air. Raymond Lull, the Spanish nobleman, who went as missionary to Africa, preached with a tongue of flame in the open air, and he was killed on the seashore while shouting to the people, "Jesus only, Jesus only." Augustine preached to King Ethelbert, of England, in the open air. Wycliffe's poor priests carried on their ministry almost exclusively in the open air. Peter of Bruys would not preach under a roof. Arnold of Brescia stood among the people in the open air and preached until he was thrown into a dungeon from which he went to a martyr's glory. Peter Waldo and "the Poor Men of

Lyons" were open-air preachers. The Franciscan, the Dominican, and the Cistercian monks preached to the people constantly in the open air. In 1382 there was presented to the parliament of England by the clergy a complaint against street preaching. John Huss, driven from his pulpit, began the Bohemian reformation in the open air. Luther did most of his work before diets and with his pen, but it is well known that he preached in the open air at Zwickau to twenty-five thousand people. At Goslar, a student from Wittenberg gathered the people under a lime tree and expounded to them the Scriptures, and they were known as the "Limetree Brethren." John Livingston's great sermon, which resulted in the conversion of five hundred Scotchmen, was delivered during a storm in the open air. Spurgeon says that he preached on the rain and the dew, while it was raining, to thousands of people who stood and drank in the word like the thirsty grass. Mr. Kirkham, of England, says that he has frequently preached on the snow in a double sense, standing upon it and talking about it. John Welsh held open-air meetings on the Tweed between England and Scotland; and when the Scottish authorities interfered, he would move back again to the English side.

The preaching of Whitefield at Kingswood Colliery is familiar to every student of the great Methodist revival. At his first service there were present only about two hundred; but before the week closed, two or three thousand listened, while they wiped tears of penitence and joy from their grimy cheeks. Wesley believed that everything should be done decently and in order, and he first thought that preaching in the open air might bring the movement into disrepute; but when he saw the power of the gospel upon these colliery people, he yielded and began himself to preach in the open air. When Whitefield left Kingswood for London, his brethren urged him not to carry this invasion with him into the city. He knelt down and asked God to keep him from doing anything rash or unwise; but when he reached London he could not restrain the fire that burned in his bones, and he was soon standing among the thousands at Moorsfield, preaching to them in a voice of thunder.

It is well known that John Wesley was refused his father's pulpit at Epworth. John Taylor stood at the door of the church and announced that Mr. Wesley would preach at six o'clock that evening in the churchyard. Wesley, standing on his father's tomb, preached from the text, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." He said afterward: "I am well assured that I did far more good to my Lincolnshire parishioners by preaching three days on my father's tomb, than I did by preaching three years in his pulpit." I for one rejoice that the Established Church drove Whitefield and Wesley to the fields. The religion of that day needed just such an airing. A short time before his death, Mr. Wesley preached at Winchelsea, when he was eighty-seven years of age, in the open air under an ash tree, known afterward as "Wesley's Tree." The Salvation Army, doubtless, would never have been heard of but for its open-air work. The burgomaster of the Hague is reported to have said: "One street preacher is worth ten policemen." St. Mary's Church in Whitechapel, London, has a pulpit built in the corner on the outside, from which the preacher reaches more people than he can induce to come within. The open-air mission, known as Carubber's Close, in Edinburgh, has resulted in the conversion of thousands. Persons on sick-beds have heard the gospel through the open window, which led them to look up and trust in God. The pastor of the Somerstown Church, in London, declares that two-thirds of his one thousand members were converted in the streets. Deacon Olney, of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, told me that more converts came into the Tabernacle as the result of open-air preaching than came through the regular ministry of Mr. Spurgeon. One of the presbyteries of Great Britain requires that all its ministers shall preach several times during the year in the open air. Bishop Aldhelm, of the seventh century, finding that he could not draw the people to his church, took his harp, and, standing on the corner, played sweetly enough to draw the crowd, and then preached to them the sweeter message of grace. If his spirit should seize the pastors of our city churches and send them out in pleasant weather to their front doorsteps or to an adjoining vacant lot, they would increase their audiences ten-fold. While I was in Liverpool I attended the St. James Episcopal Church one evening, where I heard an earnest sermon on "The Prodigal Son." There were about seventy-five people present; and, as my early education in the Episcopal prayer book had been neglected, I could not keep up with the people as they skipped from page to page. Two or three persons kindly showed me the place. The rector took in the situation and looked straight at me most of the time, while he preached earnestly on the dangers of wandering away from God and the welcome awaiting us at home. Evidently he knew that there were present about seventy-five hardened saints whom he had preached to for years and, as I did not know the Episcopal prayer book, he took me for a prodigal that needed the gospel, and doubtless the only prodigal who was present. But the surprising part of the service to me was the announcement at the close: "At seven o'clock tomorrow evening the usual open-air service will be held on the steps of this church." Promptly at seven o'clock the next evening I saw the rector open a side gate and come out with several young people carrying a little organ. He placed it on one of the great stone steps and began to play. For three hours that gospel service continued, and not less than twelve hundred people heard enough truth to take them to heaven, if they believed and acted upon it. At the close of the service I asked the rector what results came of this. He replied: "About all the results that come at all come of this. A few children of the church-members join, as a matter of course, but those that come in by regeneration are nearly all reached in the open air." The contrast between one poor prodigal on the inside of the church and twelve hundred prodigals on the outside listening to the gospel of Christ, made me decide at once that when I returned home I would preach in the open-air.

Soul Winning by Personal Work.

OR FISHING WITH HOOK INSTEAD OF NET.

By John H. Hunter.

IV. SOME DIFFICULTIES AND HOW TO MEET THEM.—Continued.

15. "I Do Not Believe the Bible."

This will often be brought up by a man who is being pressed by the Word, as if it ended the whole matter. And sometimes the worker has allowed it to do so, saying, "Well, I can't help him; he does not believe the Bible."

But sometimes the difficulty may be an honest one, requiring different treatment from the first. We will suppose, however, that you are dealing with a man along the line of sin and its results when he informs you he does not believe the Bible is God's Word. Say to him, quietly, "But, my friend, I do know it is God's Word, and this is what God says (repeating your passage, e. g., Rom. 3: 23; 6: 23; Isa. 55: 7, etc.") No matter how often he objects just repeat "God says," etc. The best way to prove to the enemy that your sword is steel is to let him feel its sharp edge. He will change his mind if you keep on using it long enough.

To show a man the absurdity of his thinking that his not believing the Bible made any difference except to himself, I have often said "There is an electric light out on the corner yonder. If you say you do not believe it, will it stop shining?" Or, "This electric car goes down to the City Hall. If you say you do not believe it, will that stop the car from going?" You see your believing or not believing does not affect the car, but if your unbelief leads you to refuse to get off the track the car will affect you unpleasantly. It is just the same with the Bible—your refusal to believe it does not change the Bible, but if you persist in it, it will be your eternal ruin. Rev. 21: 8.

It is perfectly natural that when the sword of the Spirt begins to wound a man he should try to dissuade us from using it.

With the second class, however, after showing that unbelief accepts himself and not the Word, "I am glad God has provided a way for us to find out the truth," and have him read John 7: 17 R. V., if possible. "Whom does God promise shall know whether these things be true or not? Are you willing to test it? Are you willing to seek to know God's will, and when you know it, to act on it?" Turn to John 20: 30, 31 and ask him what this book was written for. "Then, whether it turns out to be true or not, this book proposes to teach a man God's will concerning Jesus." Will you then begin at the beginning of John and read it through ten or twelve verses at a time thoughtfully, searching for the truth, asking God to enable you to see the truth if it is there, and putting into practice as soon as you find it the truth revealed?

Note.—The same plan may be used with an out-and-out infidel or agnostic. Let him pray—"Oh, God, if there is any God, show me Thy will, and I will do it. If Jesus is Thy Son, I will accept Him, renounce sin, confess Him before men, and obey Him as my Lord and Savior."

16. "I Am a Backslider."

There are three classes of backsliders, each requiring different treatment.

First—Those who were never really regenerated.

Second—Those who have seemingly lost all interest in the matter, though at one time earnest and active,

Third—Those who are anxiously wishing to return.

With the first, who are plentiful owing to the slipshod methods often pursued under the head of evangelistic work, deal as with the unsaved, or as with those mentioned in difficulty 13.

With the second, use Jer. 2: 5, holding them to God's question, no matter what their excuse. Many will try to tell you of ill-treatment at the hands of Christians. Ask them if that is any excuse for their present treatment of God; how has He treated them?

Jer. 3: 13 is always a true description of one who has really known God and gone away from Him. Ask them if it is not true? Do the world's cisterns of pleasure (?) yield them any satisfaction, or are they "broken cisterns?" A real experience of the refreshing draughts of the River of Life forever spoils a man's appetite for the world's cistern water.

Jer. 3: 19 was much used by Mr. Moody. Draw out from your enquirer its truth in his own case, and ask him if he is not ready to return, and be done with his sin and suffering.

With the third deal tenderly. Oh, the pathos of a broken-hearted backslider wanting to return, yet doubtful if he may. From Jer. 3: 22, or Hosea 14: 1-4 show God's loving invitation and promise. Use the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-24), the Backslider's Parable, as an illustration of the steps in a backslider's return:

Conviction of sin, verses 17-19.
Forsaking of sin, verse 20.
Confession of sin, verse 21.
Forgiveness and Restoration, verses 22-24.

17. "I Am Afraid I Have Committed the Unpardonable Sin."

This needs to be handled lovingly and tenderly. Thank God, the very fact that this person is troubled and anxious about the matter, is proof positive to us, as we shall see, that he has not committed the unpardonable sin.

From Matt. 12: 24-32 show just what this sin is. It is the deliberate attributing of the mighty works of the Holy Spirit to Satanic powers, thus blaspheming the Spirit of God. Notice that it is not a mere slip, a single thoughtless act, but a wilful course of action. Ask the troubled one has he ever done that? Then press home John 6: 37, "Him that cometh," etc. If it were possible for one having committed the unpardonable sin to penitently turn to God on this invitation and promise, God would have to (humanly speaking) receive him, or else be untrue to His word. This often suffices.

Within a few weeks two young men have come to me with this, and also brought up Heb. 6: 4-6, and Heb. 10: 26, 27.

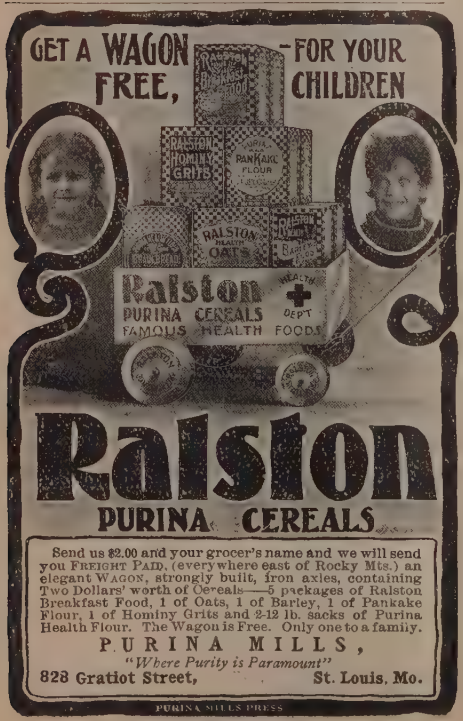
In Heb. 6: 4-6 point out that the things here spoken of do not necessarily imply regeneration. Balaam (Numb. 24-26) is a striking example of how enlightened a man may be and not be "born again." His prophecy is one of the most wonderful and one of the most beautiful in the Old Testament, and yet he perished and we are warned from his ways. Judas (Matt. 10: 1-8; Mark 6: 12, 13) is an example of a man "made partaker of the Holy

Ghost," and having "tasted the powers of the world ("age," R. V.) to come," and yet after doing mighty works with the others "falling away," and going to "his own place." Notice that faith and love which are always prominent in regeneration have no mention in this description. Notice, also the reason why nothing can be done for such persons, "impossible to renew them unto repentance" for they "are crucifying the Son of God afresh." True repentance can only be wrought by the Holy Spirit and if His loving efforts to lead men to repent are persistently despised, the Savior whom He holds out for men to believe on spurned afresh, the case is hopeless. Note the change from past condition in verses 4 and 5 to present action in verse 6.

Heb. 10: 26, 27. Remember this and the preceding passage are written to Hebrews who were in danger not simply of backsliding, but of apostatizing from the faith, and denying the Lord Jesus Christ.

As to what is meant here by "sin wilfully," see Numb. 15: 29, 30 and Deut. 17: 12. "A presumptuous sinner is one who refuses to hearken to priest or judge, one who against right persistently chooses to do wrong." Note that no sacrifice was provided for this sin. To sin wilfully, then, is to deliberately choose evil and hold fast to it in spite of teaching or warning. See Balaam for illustration. It is a state of heart, rather than a single act. It is clear that such an one cannot be saved.

Much prayer must accompany this dealing, and always follow up with John 6: 37 l. c.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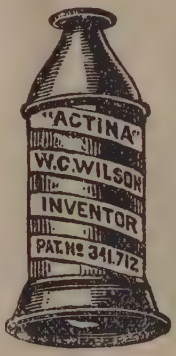

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BANKS' SERMONS.

Vol. III. INCORPORATED WITH CURRENT ANECDOTES. No. 4.

My Three Angels.

"The labor of the righteous tendeth to life." Proverbs 10: 16.

"And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." Genesis 29: 20.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." I Peter 4: 12, 13.

There is a little poem bearing the same title as my discourse, a poem written by Mr. J. S. Cutler, the opening stanzas of which have suggested to me my theme. Mr. Cutler sings:

"Three angels travel with me as I journey toward the west,
Where far-off sunset mountains stand, to guard the vales of rest;
Three angels—and I cannot tell which angel is the best.

The first that came to share my lot, when life was young and fair,
Was he whom men call Labor, as they meet him everywhere;
And he filled my life with strivings, and the whole round world with care.

And then came Love, and all the earth grew strangely bright and new;
And my first angel seemed more fair, more loyal, real and true;
For Love makes Labor lighter, and the skies more deeply blue.

Then last of all came Sorrow, an unasked, unwelcome guest;
And he walked along beside us, as we journeyed to the west;
And Love grew strangely sweet and fair, and Labor doubly blest."

I believe the poet is right in declaring labor to be an angel of light and blessing. When labor is not a blessing it is because there is something wrong about it or us. Good honest labor, necessary to the world's sustenance and advancement, performed with a faithful purpose, and rewarded by just wages, is a blessing to all concerned in it. One reason why so many people see in labor only a blight and a curse is that they have no purpose in their labor, save to get it off their hands, and get money for it in return. Such labor is meaningless. Labor to be worthy of a man or a woman must have some intelligent purpose.

An American mine owner, during a visit in London became acquainted with a young Englishman, and taking a fancy to him, he said, "If you come to America we will treat you well." "What can you offer me?" asked the young man. "What can you do?" "Anything," was the light reply. "Then, we don't want you," was the quick, good-humored retort. "We have no use for people who can do anything. We want men who can do something better than anybody else." The only way one can do that is to have a high opinion of one's work, to rejoice in the opportunity to do it, and then seek to do it, however humble it may be, with all the enthusiasm and romantic spirit that ever inspired the noblest artist.

Every honest worker, who is doing necessary work for his fellow men has a right to hold up his head and look every man in the face. Paul was a tent maker, Peter and John were fishermen, and Jesus Christ was a carpenter, and their fellow-craftsmen have a right to think well of themselves if they do their work well, and live in a noble spirit.

I noticed as the title of a story the other day in one of our papers, "Stitching the Sunbeams with Needle and Thread," and why shouldn't there be sunbeams for the seamstress as well as for anybody else? But, alas! there were no sunbeams for the poor starving workers who inspired Hood's "Song of the Shirt," and there are none to-day for the white slaves of the sweat shops of modern cities. But it is the sin of the oppressor that has shut out the sunbeams.

No man in modern times has so lofty a pulpit as the Christian employer of labor, who so deals with his employees that their labor is to them a ministering angel of light and blessing. A distinguished English minister preached some tir e ago on hypocrisy. A few days afterwards he received a letter from one of his members, who was the manager of a large business establishment. The man said that after hearing that Sunday evening sermon he went home and said to himself: "I am living the life of a hypocrite." He sat down and wrote a letter to his employers to this effect:

"Gentlemen: I am conducting your business under your direction on lines that are injuring my spiritual life, and I hereby resign my position." All day Monday, he said, the devil taunted him with the folly that he had committed, throwing up his place, with no prospects of his wife and children. Tuesday was also dark, and Wednesday, but he said, "I would rather starve than be false to my God." On Thursday morning a letter came from his employers saying that his resignation had been carefully considered; they recognized his value, and they requested him to return and conduct their business in such a way that it would be consistent with his spiritual convictions.

While emphasizing the fact that labor should be an angel of light, we must not forget its application to us as Christians. There can be no doubt that labor for Christ and our fellow men is always an angel of blessing. Those who fill their hands and hearts with divine service are the ones who enter into a most heavenly and blessed fellowship, which not only makes their lives useful here, but fits them for the bliss of heaven. I sometimes wonder how these people that slip along here, without any fellowship with Christ in carrying the burdens that press on his shoulders, expect to enjoy heaven. In these great cities there are thousands and tens of thousands of men and women who have, in other days, in country or village homes, enjoyed the service of Christ in earnest work for the church, but they come to the city, and are swallowed up in its great maw of worldliness, and multitudes of them lose their Christian experience and all the happiness of Christian service, because they fail to come in touch with the Church of Christ in any responsible way.

One of our city pastors had a strange dream. It came after a day of pastoral calling. This was the vision that came to him: Saint Peter stood at heaven's portal. A company of self-complacent men and women came smiling up to the gates of pearl. "And who are you?" inquired Saint Peter. "Church members, every one of us," replied the spokesman of the party. "Indeed?" "Yes, here are our letters, Peter. We kept them stored away in our trunks, and specially requested that they might be placed within our hands, when we should lie in our caskets. We knew you would be asking for them." "Let me see the dates," said Peter. "Eighteen seventy-nine—over twenty years ago! Here is another—Eighteen Eighty-four—Eighteen Eighty-nine—Eighteen Ninety-two—Eighteen Ninety-six—well, well. Can it be that all these years you have failed to identify yourselves with any church of Jesus?" "Well, Peter, you see we were moving so often, when we were down below, and then the ties to the dear old home church were so sacred we did not wish to hurt the feelings of our old pastor, who baptized us and married us. So we have simply gone from church to church; but, oh, Peter, we have become wonderful sermon-tasters."

A quiet smile crept over the face of the heavenly warder. "My children, you may as well linger awhile outside the portal, until the ties of the 'dear old home church' are snapped. For the sake of a sentiment, you have through these years been disobeying Christ. I fear you would not be happy in the upper temple." My friend awoke, and lo, it was a dream. But I am sure it was a dream founded on very sad facts.

It is not only those who linger outside the church who fail to know the blessing that comes from fellowship with the angel of labor. All the years have taught me the great truth that it is the people who give themselves to Christ and his church with the most generous and self-sacrificing devotion, and who pour out their gifts at the feet of the Saviour with the prodigality that marked the Wise Men, who laid their rich treasures of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, at the feet of Mary's child in the Bethlehem stable, who receive in return such a fellowship with angels, that like the Wise Men they go on their way praising God with exceeding joy.

Our second angel is Love. Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed as "a few days," because of the great love which filled his heart for her. If you want to know how strong that love was, you want to read Jacob's dying conversation with Joseph in Egypt. As Joseph sat beside his bed, Jacob said to him, "God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz, in the Land of Canaan, and blessed me, and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed for an everlasting possession. * * * And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the Land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath; and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath." Henry Ward Beecher, preaching on this love of Jacob, and this reference to it, says there is something in the helplessness of former days to express affection that touches every generous soul. Modern loves have had their literature. Dante has lifted up his Beatrice, and made her the world's admiration. Petrarch's Laura will not be forgotten while letters last. Poets build temples in verse wherein they enshrine love and give it immortality. The letters of Abelard and Heloise will make their names famous to the end of time, which show that they spent their life in repenting of that which was the noblest thing that belonged to that life—the fact that they loved each other.

But, brief as is Jacob's word about Rachel, coming as it does on the boundary of life, is a testimony to Rachel more touching and exquisite in its simplicity, than any man has ever laid at the feet of his beloved. The simple mention of her name by the side of that of God, in this last tremulous moment of his life, is itself a monument to her, to her goodness, to her loveableness, to the ascendancy which she gained over the patriarch's heart. I am sure that any noble woman would rather be Rachel, than Laura, or Beatrice.

Love is the great fountain of life. Some men and women make the great blunder of using love as a kind of well, to which they come when they are thirsty, as a man comes up from the field worn with toil, and soiled with perspiration, and pulls down the old well-sweep, until the moss-covered bucket is filled with cold water at the bottom and is drawn up to slake the raging of his thirst. And then they go away again, as goes the farmer to other experiences for satisfaction. But there is a love grander and more splendid than that, that is not like a well, that must have its sweep, or windlass, or pump, to reach its crystal depths, but that is rather like a fountain, like a great mountain spring, where one needs nothing to draw with, but which pours forth its life-giving waters, day and night through all seasons, and through all the years. To know a love like that, which one always mentions

in tremulous connection with the thought of God, and of worship, and of heaven, is to be exalted and enobled.

It is the great mission of Jesus Christ to bring the angel of Love into such fellowship with the hearts of men and women everywhere that our brothers and sisters will become sacred to us, and the golden wand of love shall be the law of our lives. Charles Mackay, in his little song, "If Men Were Wise," catches a glimpse of what will happen when Christ has brought us into full communion with the angel of Love.

What might be done if men were wise—
What glorious deeds my suffering brother,
Would they unite
In love and right,
And cease their scorn of one another?

Oppression's heart might be imbued
With kindling drops of loving-kindness;
And knowledge pour
From shore to shore,
Light on the eyes of mental blindness.

The meanest wretch that ever trod,
The deepest sunk in guilt and sorrow,
Might stand erect
In self respect,
And share the teeming world to-morrow.

What might be done? This might be done,
And more than this, my suffering brother-
More than the tongue
Ere said or sung,
If men were wise and loved each other."

Sorrow, too, is an angel. An angel in black when she first comes, but is glorified if we open the door with a reverent welcome, and greet her as the guest of God. Sorrow comes in one of two ways, either as a guest or a ghost. Phillips Brooks says that sorrow may come to us as the ghost came to Macbeth to make noises in his otherwise quiet rooms, to disturb his slumber, and interfere with his peace. If we look at sorrow like that, then it will only haunt us, and it shall bring us no good, and we shall be no nearer to God because of it. But on the other hand, sorrow may come to us as the angels came to Abraham when he was encamped in the desert. He ran to receive them, and led them into the quiet shade. He brought water to wash their feet; he prepared at once for their entertainment, and then he sought to know their message from God. Then it was they took him into their secret council, and told him hidden things of God's purposes and plans. So it is possible for us to receive sorrow as God's angel, and instead of rebelling against it, seek by reverence and loving humility to find out the message God is seeking to impart to us.

Sorrow is the angel to many of us that the furnace is to the gold that has been packed away in hidden veins of ore. Here is a young miner, up in Alaska, who, though ignorant and inexperienced about the art of mining, has suddenly stumbled into the discovery of the Mother Lode that miners have always been talking about. He looks at it with swelling breast, and exclaims "I am mountain rich." He puts an army of men at work, digging away the earth, digging out the ore, and preparing his gold for the market. The workmen take the ore in truck-loads and throw it into the furnace, and he watches the process with greedy eyes, saying, "What, put my precious gold in the fire!" And as it begins to melt, and flow out, and grow less and less, he is appalled to see how it is wasting away. He can hold in one hand what it took four mules to pull a few hours ago. But the smelters laugh, and say, "You have lost nothing; you have gained by as much as it has shrunk; it was nothing but ore, and ninety-nine-one-hundredths of it was good for nothing, and that which was good was so tied up that it could not serve you at all. It was necessary that you should lose ninety-nine parts of it in order that you might have the benefit of the other one-hundredth."

Life is like that. All circumstances and conditions in which you look for happiness are only veins of crude ore. Sorrow and discipline are smelting furnaces where the dross is taken away, and the real gold of life is saved. When I first went to a western city, where the air was dense with the smoke of soft coal used in manufactories, I complained bitterly of it to a lady one day, when she exclaimed laughingly: "You must not complain of that, for there is where I get all my money. The smoke is my good angel." So it is out of the smelting furnace; it is from between the grinding, whirling wheels; it is from the smoke of toil, of burden, of struggle, of sorrow, that we come to possess the true gold of character that will pass current in the City of God.

Then let us welcome God's angels—Labor, and Love, and Sorrow—welcome them as Jacob did the angels at Bethel. They shall lead us as they led him up the shining stairway till we stand in the presence of God. Let us close then, as we begun, with our poet:

"So we traveled on together, my dear angel friends and I,
And life took on new meanings, as the fruitful years went by;
And I prayed them: 'Tarry with me till my time shall come to die!'

Thus onward through the changeful years have we together passed.
Along that pathway leading where the silence falls at last.
Each angel proving leal and true, where'er my lot is cast.

The mountains where the sunset waits, loom nearer in the west;
But safe my angels lead me toward the peaceful vales of rest;
And only he who sent them knows which angel is the best."

SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD.

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

Preached at Enfield July 8, 1741, at a time of great awakening.

Their foot shall slide in due time.—Deut. xxxii., 35.

In this verse is threatened the vengeance of God on the wicked, unbelieving Israelites, who were God's visible people, and who lived under the means of grace; but who, notwithstanding all God's wonderful works towards them, remained (as ver. 28) void of counsel, having no understanding in them. Under all the cultivations of heaven, they brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit; as in the two verses next preceding the text. The expression I have chosen for my text—Their foot shall slide in due time—seems to imply the following things, relating to the punishment and destruction to which these wicked Israelites were exposed.

1. That they were always exposed to destruction; as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall. This is implied in the manner of their destruction coming upon them, being represented by their foot sliding. The same is expressed, Psalm lxxiii., 18. "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction."

2. It implies that they were always exposed to sudden unexpected destruction. As he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he cannot foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once without warning, which is also expressed in Psalm lxxiii., 18, 19. "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction; how are they brought into desolation as in a moment!"

3. Another thing implied is, that they are liable to fall of themselves, without being thrown down by the hand of another; as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.

4. That the reason why they are not fallen already, and do not fall now, is only that God's appointed time is not come. For it is said, that when that due time, or appointed time, comes, their foot shall slide. Then they shall be left to fall, as they are inclined by their own weight. God will not hold them up in these slippery places any longer, but will let them go; and then, at that very instant, they shall fall into destruction; as he that stands on such slippery declining ground, on the edge of a pit, he cannot stand alone; when he is let go he immediately falls and is lost.

The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this: "There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God." By the mere pleasure of God, I mean his sovereign pleasure, his arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty, any more than if nothing else but God's mere will had in the least degree, or in any respect whatsoever, any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment. The truth of this observation may appear by the following considerations:

1. There is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment. Men's hands cannot be strong when God rises up. The strongest have no power to resist him, nor can any deliver out of his hands. He is not only able to cast wicked men into hell, but he can most easily do it. Sometimes an earthly prince meets with a great deal of difficulty to subdue a rebel, who has found means to fortify himself, and has made himself strong by the numbers of his followers. But it is not so with God. There is no fortress that is any defence from the power of God. Though hand join in hand, and vast multitudes of God's enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken in pieces. They are as great heaps of light chaff before the whirlwind; or large quantities of dry stubble before devouring flames. We find it easy to tread on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth; so it is easy for us to cut or singe a slender thread that anything hangs by; thus easy is it for God, when he pleases, to cast his enemies down to hell. What are we, that we should think to stand before him, at whose rebuke the earth trembles, and before whom the rocks are thrown down?

2. They deserve to be cast into hell; so that divine justice never stands in the way—it makes no objection against God's using his power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their sins. Divine justice says of the tree that brings such grapes of Sodom, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke xiii., 7. The sword of divine justice is every moment brandished over their heads, and it is nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God's mere will, that holds it back.

3. They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell. They do not only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between him and mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them: so that they are bound over already to hell. John iii., 18. "He that believeth not is condemned already." So that every unconverted man properly belongs to hell; that is his place; from thence he is. John viii., 23. "Ye are from beneath." And thither he is bound; it is the place, that justice, and God's word, and the sentence of his unchangeable law assign to him.

4. They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell. And the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as he is with many miserable creatures now tormented in hell, who there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth; yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, who it may be are at ease, than he is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell.

So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that he does not let loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such an one as themselves, though they may imagine him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them.

5. The devil stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him. They belong to him; he has their souls in his possession, and under his dominion. The scripture represents them as his gods, Luke xi., 12. The devils watch them; they are ever by them at their right hand; they stand waiting for them, like greedy hungry lions that see their prey, and expect to have it, but are for the present kept back. If God should withdraw his hand, by which they are restrained, they would in one moment fly upon their poor souls. The old serpent is gaping for them; hell opens its mouth wide to receive them; and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost.

6. There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell fire, if it were not for God's restraints. There is laid in the very nature of carnal men, a foundation for the torments of hell. There are those corrupt principles, in reigning power in them, and in full possession of them, that are seeds of hell fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same manner as the same corruptions, the same enmity does in the hearts of damned souls, and would beget the same torments as they do in them. The souls of the wicked are in scripture compared to the troubled sea, Isa. lvii., 20. For the present God restrains their wickedness by his mighty power, as he does the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further," but if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon carry all before it. Sin is the ruin and misery of the soul; it is destructive in its nature; and if God should leave it without restraint, there would need nothing else to make the soul perfectly miserable. The corruption of the heart of man is immoderate and boundless in its fury; and while wicked men live here, it is like fire pent up by God's restraints, whereas if it were let loose, it would set on fire the course of nature; and as the heart is now a sink of sin, so if sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into a fiery oven, or a furnace of fire and brimstone.

7. It is no security to wicked men for one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand. It is no security to a natural man, that he is now in health, and that he does not see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by any accident, and that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages, shows this is no evidence, that the man is not on the very brink of eternity, and that the next step will not be into another world. The unseen, un-thought-of ways and means of persons going suddenly out of the world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noon-day; the sharpest sight cannot discern them. God has so many different unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending them to hell, that there is nothing to make it appear, that God had need to be at the expense of a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of his providence, to destroy any wicked man, at any moment. All the means that there are of sinners going out of the world, are so in God's hands, and so universally and absolutely subject to his power and determination that it does not depend at all the less on the mere will of God, whether sinners shall at any moment go to hell, than if means were never made use of, or at all concerned in the case.

8. Natural men's prudence and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them, do not secure them a moment. To this, divine providence and universal experience do also bear testimony. There is this clear evidence that men's own wisdom is no security to them from death; that if it were otherwise we should see some difference between the wise and politic men of the world, and others, with regard to their liableness to early and unexpected death; but how is it in fact? Eccles. ii., 16. "How dieth the wise man? even as the fool."

9. All wicked men's pains and contrivances which they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell, flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends upon himself for his own security; he flatters himself in

what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do. Every one lays out matters in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flatters himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his schemes will not fail. They hear indeed that there are but few saved, and that the greater part of men that have died heretofore have gone to hell; but each one imagines that he lays out matters better for his own escape than others have done. He does not intend to come to that place of torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take effectual care, and to order matters so for himself as not to fail.

But the foolish children of men miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and in confidence in their own strength and wisdom; they trust to nothing but a shadow. The greater part of those who heretofore have lived under the same means of grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to hell; and it was not because they were not as wise as those who are now alive; it was not because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape. If we could speak with them, and inquire of them, one by one, whether they expected when alive, and when they used to hear about hell, ever to be the subjects of that misery; we doubtless should hear one and another reply, "No, I never intended to come here; I had laid out matters otherwise in my mind; I thought I should contrive well for myself; I thought my scheme good. I intended to take effectual care; but it came upon me unexpected; I did not look for it at that time, and in that manner; it came as a thief; Death outwitted me; God's wrath was too quick for me. Oh, my cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself, and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do hereafter; and when I was saying, Peace and safety, then suddenly destruction came upon me."

10. God has laid himself under no obligation by any promise to keep any natural man out of hell one moment. God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the covenant of grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. But surely they have no interest in the promises of the covenant of grace who are not the children of the covenant, who do not believe in any of the promises, and have no interest in the Mediator of the covenant.

So that, whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking, it is plain and manifest, that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.

So that, thus it is that natural men are held in the hand of God, over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them, and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out; and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

APPLICATION.

The use of this awful subject may be for awakening unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor anything to take hold of; there is nothing between you and hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but do not see the hand of God in it; but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw his hand they would avail no more to keep you from falling, than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon;

the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flames of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies. God's creatures are good, and were made for men to serve God with, and do not willingly subserve to any other purpose, and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end. And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of him who hath subjected it in hope. There are black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays his rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. It is true, that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the meantime is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are constantly rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw his hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood. Thus all you that never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all you that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to a state of new, and before altogether unexperienced light and life, are in the hands of an angry God. However you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets, and in the house of God, it is nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction. However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you, see that it was so with them; for destruction came suddenly upon most of them; when they expected nothing of it, and while they were saying, peace and safety; now they see, that those things on which they depended for peace and safety, were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathesome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: His wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment. And consider here more particularly,

1. Whose wrath it is: it is the wrath of the infinite God. If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most potent prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute monarchs, who have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power, to be disposed of at their mere will. Prov. 20: 2. "The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: Whoso provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul." The subject that very much enrages an arbitrary prince, is liable to suffer the most extreme

torments that human art can invent, or human power can inflict. But the greatest earthly potentates in their greatest majesty and strength, and when clothed in their greatest terrors, are but feeble, despicable worms of the dust, in comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth. It is but little that they can do, when most enraged, and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth, before God, are as grasshoppers; they are nothing, and less than nothing: both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of kings, is as much more terrible than theirs, as his majesty is greater. Luke 12: 4, 5. "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."

2. It is the fierceness of his wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the fury of God; as in Isaiah 59: 18, "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries." So Isaiah 66: 15, "For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire." And in many other places. So, Rev. 19: 15, we read of "the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." The words are exceedingly terrible. If it had only been said "the wrath of God" the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful; but it is "the fierceness and wrath of God!" the fury of God! the fierceness of Jehovah! Oh, how dreadful must that be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is also "the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as men are wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath. Oh! then, what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worms that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong? And whose heart can endure? To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this!

Consider this, you that are here present, that yet remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fierceness of his anger, implies that he will inflict wrath without any pity. When God beholds the ineffable extremity of your case, and sees your torment to be so vastly disproportioned to your strength, and sees how your poor soul is crushed, and sinks down, as it were, into an infinite gloom, he will have no compassion upon you, he will not forbear the executions of his wrath, or in the least lighten his hand; there shall be no moderation or mercy, nor will God then at all stay his rough wind; he will have no regard to your welfare, nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much in any other sense, than only that you shall not suffer beyond what strict justice requires. Nothing shall be withheld, because it is so hard for you to bear. Ezek. 8: 18. "Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet I will not hear them." Now God stands ready to pity you; this is a day of mercy; you may cry now with some encouragement of obtaining mercy. But when once the day of mercy is past, your most lamentable and dolorous cries and shrieks will be in vain; you will be wholly lost and thrown away of God, as to any regard to your welfare. God will have no other use to put you to, but to suffer misery; you shall be continued in being to no other end; for you will be a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction; and there will be no other use of this vessel, but to be filled full of wrath. God will be so far from pitying you when you cry to him, that it is said he will only "laugh and mock." Prov. 1: 25, 26, etc.

How awful are those words, Isa. 63: 3, which are the words of the great God. "I will tread them in mine anger, and will trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." It is perhaps impossible to conceive of words that carry in them greater manifestations of these three things, viz: contempt, and hatred, and fierceness of indignation. If you cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favor, that instead of that, he will only tread you under foot. And though he will know that you cannot bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you, yet he will not regard that, but he will crush you under his feet without mercy; he will crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his garments, so as to stain all his raiment. He will not only hate you, but he will have you in the utmost contempt; no place shall be thought fit for you, but under his feet to be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

3. The misery you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that he might show what that wrath of Jehovah is. God hath had it on his heart to show to angels and men, both how excellent his love is, and also how terrible his wrath is. Sometimes earthly kings have a mind to show how terrible their wrath is, by the extreme punishments they would execute on those that would provoke them. Nebuchadnezzar, that mighty and haughty monarch of the Chaldean empire, was willing to show his wrath when enraged with Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego; and accordingly gave orders that the burning fiery furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it was before; doubtless, it was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness that

human art could raise it. But the great God is also willing to show his wrath, and magnify his awful majesty and mighty power in the extreme sufferings of his enemies. Rom. 9: 22. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endure with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" And seeing this is his design, and what he has determined, even to show how terrible the unrestrained wrath, the fury and fierceness of Jehovah is, he will do it to effect. There will be something accomplished and brought to pass that will be dreadful with a witness. When the great and angry God hath risen up and executed his awful vengeance on the poor sinner, and the wretch is actually suffering the infinite weight and power of his indignation, then will God call upon the whole universe to behold that awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it. Isa. 33: 12-14. "And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire. Hear ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites," etc.

And thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted state, if you continue in it; the infinite might, and majesty, and terribleness of the omnipotent God shall be magnified upon you, in the ineffable strength of your torments. You shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and when you shall be in this state of suffering, the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go forth and look on the awful spectacle, that they may see what the wrath and fierceness of the Almighty is; and when they have seen it, they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty. Isa. 66: 23, 24. "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men, that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

4. It is everlasting wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity. There will be no end to this exquisite horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, and mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is? All that we can possibly say about it, gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable; for "who knows the power of God's anger?"

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in the danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however, moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh, that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think, that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of. If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! But, alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell? And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, even before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons, that now sit here in some seats of this meeting-house, in health, quiet and secure, should be there before to-morrow morning. Those of you that finally continue in a natural condition, that shall keep out of hell longest will be there in a little time! Your damnation does not slumber; it will come swiftly, and, in all probability, very suddenly upon many of you. You have reason to wonder that you are not already in hell. It is doubtless the case of some whom you have seen and known, that never deserved hell more than you, and that heretofore appeared as likely to have been now alive as you. Their case is past all hope; they are crying in extreme misery and perfect despair; but here you are in the land of the living and in the house of God, and have an opportunity to obtain salvation. What would not those poor damned hopeless souls give for one day's opportunity such as you now enjoy!

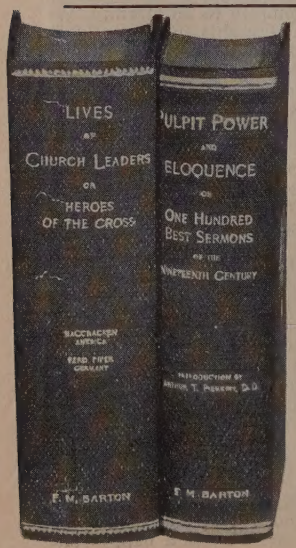
And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God. Many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are now in a happy state,

with their hearts filled with love to him who has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit. How can you rest one moment in such a condition? Are not your souls as precious as the souls of the people at Suffield, where they are flocking from day to day to Christ?

Are there not many here who have lived long in the world, and are not to this day born again? And so are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and have done nothing ever since they have lived, but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? Oh, sirs, your case, in an especial manner, is extremely dangerous. Your guilt and hardness of heart is extremely great. Do you not see how generally persons of your years are passed over and left, in the present remarkable and wonderful dispensation of God's mercy? You had need to consider yourselves, and awake thoroughly out of sleep. You cannot bear the fierceness and wrath of the infinite God. And you, young men, and young women, will you neglect this precious season which you now enjoy, when so many others of your age are renouncing all youthful vanities, and flocking to Christ? You especially have now an extraordinary opportunity; but if you neglect it, it will soon be with you as with those persons who spent all the precious days of youth in sin, and are now come to such a dreadful pass in blindness and hardness. And you, children, who are unconverted, do not you know that you are going down to hell, to bear the dreadful wrath of that God, who is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be content to be the children of the devil, when so many other children in the land are converted and are become the holy and happy children of the King of Kings?

And let everyone that is yet out of Christ, and hanging over the pit of hell, whether they be old men and women, or middle aged, or young people, or little children, now hearken to the loud calls of God's word and providence. This acceptable year of the Lord, a day of such great favors to some, will doubtless be a day of as remarkable vengeance to others. Men's hearts harden, and their guilt increases apace at such a day as this, if they neglect their souls; and never was there so great danger of such persons being given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his elect in all parts of the land; and probably the greater part of adult persons that ever shall be saved, will be brought in now in a little time, and that it will be as it was on the great outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jews in the apostles' days; the election will obtain, and the rest will be blinded. If this should be the case with you, you will eternally curse this day, and will curse the day that ever you was born, to see such a season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, and will wish that you had died and gone to hell before you had seen it. Now undoubtedly it is, as it was in the days of John the Baptist, the axe is in an extraordinary manner laid at the root of the trees, that every tree which brings not forth good fruit, may be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Therefore, let every one that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom: "Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed."



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